

MARCH 1915

PRICE 15 CENTS

THE  
**RED BOOK**  
MAGAZINE



STARK  
DAVIS



"WHAT DO YOU CHARGE FOR BOARD, SIR?"

*Painted by Eduard V. Brewer for Cream of Wheat Co.*

*Copyright 1915 by Cream of Wheat Co.*



# MARCH RED BOOK MAGAZINE

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## PHOTOGRAPHIC ART STUDIES Beautiful Women of the Stage

### THE THREE PACE-SETTING NOVELS OF 1915

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| <b>The Island of Surprise</b> .....   | <b>Cyrus Townsend Brady</b> ..... | <b>865</b> |
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### THE BEST SHORT STORIES OF THE DAY

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| What happened when the coming champion looked into the eyes of the girl.                 |                                  |             |

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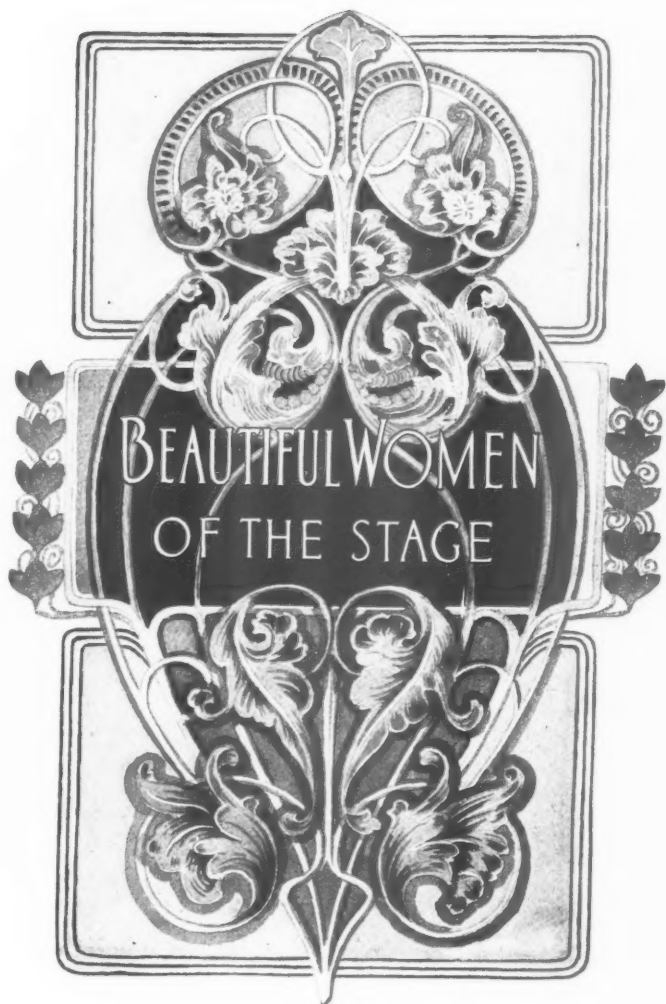
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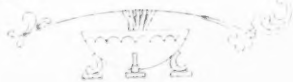


MAUDE FULTON  
in "The Candy Shop"  
Photograph by Rex Hoffman, Chicago





GAIL KANE  
in "The Miracle Man"  
Photograph by White, N. Y.

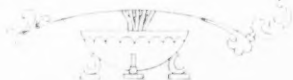




MRS. LAWRENCE D'ORSAY  
in "The Earl of Pawtucket"  
Photograph by Floyd, N. Y.



CHARLOTTE WALKER  
in "The Better Way"  
Photograph by White, N. Y.





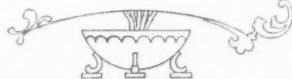
ROSE BARNET

Photograph by Mishkin, N. Y.





LOTTIE BRISCOE  
Film Play Star

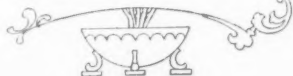




MARIE WALLACE  
in "The Ziegfeld Follies"  
Photograph by White, N. Y.

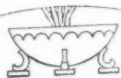


JANE CARLTON  
in "Baby Mine"  
Photograph by James R. Bushnell, Seattle



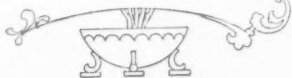


"CHIC" BOLANDER  
in Vaudeville  
Photograph by James & Bushnell, Seattle





AUGUSTA ANDERSON  
in Vaudeville  
Photograph by Floyd, N. Y.

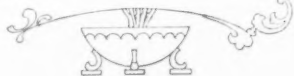




NANA STONE  
in "The Candy Shop"  
Photograph by Rex Hoffman, Chicago



REEVA GREENWOOD  
in "Excuse Me"  
Photograph by James & Bushnell, "mattle"





Drawn by Henry A.  
Smedley to illustrate  
*The Spirit of Night*,  
By L. J. BEESTON  
— See page 877.

He trembles all over, catches at the table for support. He has become suddenly afraid; a mortal fear almost makes his heart stop. Who is this woman?



March  
1915

THE  
**RED BOOK**  
MAGAZINE

Vol. XXIV  
No 5

RAY LONG, Editor



## MELVILLE DAVISSON POST

author of "The Stolen Life," etc., is the latest addition to THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE'S list of "big" writers. In the next—the April—issue will appear the first of his new stories of "Uncle Abner," the best mystery stories of the day. "Uncle Abner" is a Virginian who uses a fine mixture of legal sense and common sense to unravel tangles which puzzle others. Mr. Post writes of him with a style which has no equal in the United States. Each story will be complete in one issue. Watch for

"THE STRAW MAN,"

in the April number, on the news-stands March twenty-third.

THE RED BOOK IS SETTING THE  
PACE IN THE MAGAZINE WORLD

By  
Peter  
B. Kyne

Author of  
"The Handshake  
Agreement," etc.



"Well, Father, dear Father, I've come home

## Sauce The

"What is sauce for the  
goose is sauce for the  
gander."—Irish proverb.

**I**N the "good  
old days," by  
which certain  
persons con-  
nected directly and in-  
directly with the mer-  
chant marine of all  
nations designate that  
period in our civilization  
when a sailor was con-





ILLUSTRATED

BY

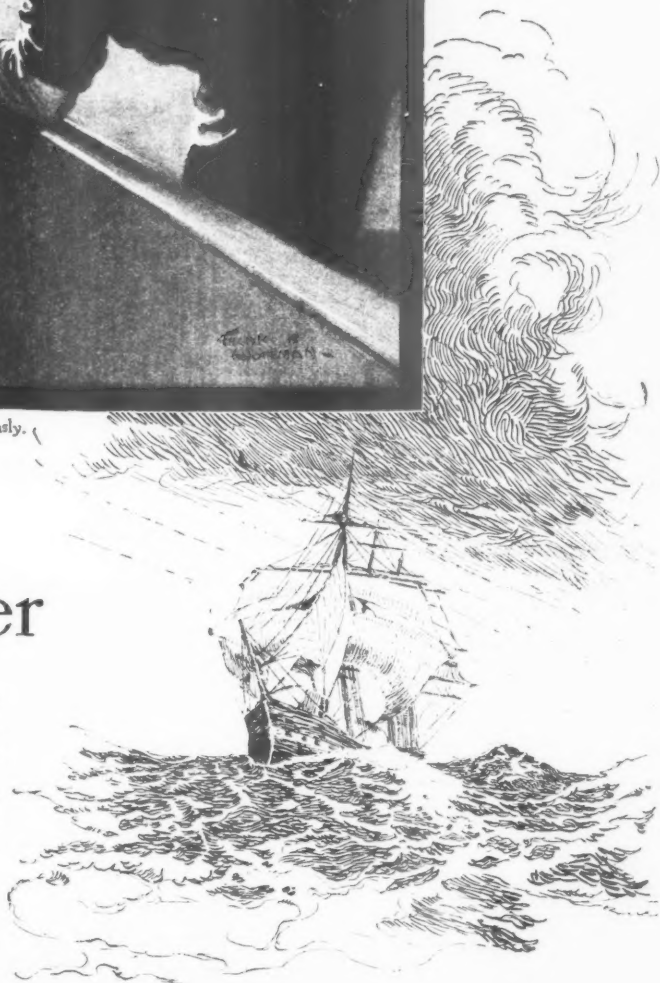
FRANK B.

HOFFMAN

to die," the stranger declared facetiously.

# For Gander

sidered an animal and treated accordingly, Mr. Martin McFadden was the proprietor of a sailor's boarding house and groggery at the foot of Drumm Street on the San Francisco water-front. While Mr. McFadden was bad black Irish, two generations removed, a certain nice



consideration for the Scandinavian antecedents of his guests had impelled him to apply to his place of business the title "The City of Bergen." Next door to The City of Bergen was a little cubby-hole of an office, over the portal of which appeared the legend: "McFadden's Employment Bureau." This latter bore to the former relatively the same relation as a wart on a red and bulbous nose, which is to state that they both belonged to the same person and while distinctly different were nevertheless inseparable.

Mart McFadden's billhead and letterhead proclaimed him a ship's comprador, but his little world which knew him well, designated his avocation by a shorter and uglier word—*crimp*. The lower strata of the maritime world called him other things and with entire justice, for Mart McFadden was a brisk and business-like person whose task it was to supply crews to vessels bound for deep water, and all was grist that came to his mill.

In the good old days, when California was one of the great wheat producing centers and the United States had no merchant marine to speak of, the crimping business was particularly good in San Francisco. During the salmon fishing season in Alaska most of the able bodied seamen on the coast go north, attracted by the bait of several hundreds of dollars to be earned in the brief fishing season between May and August. That, in Mart McFadden's day, as now, created a scarcity of sailors and forced up the bonus or blood money a skipper must pay a crimp for procuring him a crew.

About the time the salmon fleet came home the wheat crop had begun to move, with a huge fleet of foreign bottoms lying in the stream waiting for crews. But still there would not be enough sailors to go round, for the returning fishermen would be opulent and decline to ship for the succeeding two months at least; and when they did ship they preferred to run coastwise where the pay was higher, the food better, the treatment halfway human and a lapse of thirty days on the average between ports.

In the fall, therefore, the blood-money often soared to eighty dollars a head, for which reason one could scarcely blame Mart McFadden for his frequent slips from the path of rectitude. When the blood money ran that high, with real sailors few and far between, a man was a man to Mart McFadden, regardless of age, creed, color or previous condition of servitude. He simply had to keep his business together, and if a man didn't ship willingly, Mr. McFadden would "shanghai" him if he could. Since he was experienced in this line of endeavor, quite generally he could. The skippers, driven to desperation by the demurrage while waiting for crews, gladly took what Mart's runner brought aboard unconscious, and never asked embarrassing questions. After all, the skipper is high and low justice outside the three-mile limit.

**B**EFORE proceeding with the tale of Mr. McFadden's ventures in the gentle art of shanghai, however, it is necessary that we present first a brief sketch of the McFadden family—three generations of it. Beginning with Mart McFadden the first, afterward known as Grandpa, we learn that Grandpa McFadden was what used to be known in San Franciscan history as a "Sidney duck," or in other words an escaped convict from the Australian penal colony at Bounty Bay. Grandpa was the founder of the McFadden fortune and elevated crimping from a profession to a fine art.

Mart McFadden II was Grandpa's only son and the joy of the latter's declining years. Fighting came naturally to Mart II, and at twenty-eight he retired from the ring undefeated champion welter-weight of the world. A crass individual with slight pretensions to pugilistic ability had given Mart II, the hero of our story, such a terrific battle to a rather one-sided draw, that the champion was shrewd enough to seize upon Grandpa's death as an excuse to retire with his laurels faded but still on his rather low, sloping brow.

Forthwith he had taken over the old man's sailor's boarding house and

groggery and continued the business at the old stand, with the addition of "McFadden's Employment Bureau." Mart handled his real sailors in The City of Bergen, but the employment bureau was a trap for floating laborers, which are the safest kind of man to shanghai; for when a floater has been kicked ashore at a port on the other side of the world he continues to float. Generally such a person is not a man of decided character—otherwise he would not be a floater. Mart McFadden was shrewd enough to realize this, and while there was always the chance that a shanghaied man would some day return and mete out justice red-handed, still, a weak man hates in a weak, ineffectual way and time soon blunts the edge of his resentment.

Doubtless many of McFadden's victims swore to return and settle with the crimp, but of the hundreds of men he had shipped in his day but nine returned to argue the question. Of the nine, four had administered to Mart the kind of beating sailors know how to administer. They caught him foul each time. Sea-boots had staved in three of his ribs; a marlin-spike had broken his right collar bone; a Norse fist had shifted his nose hard a-starboard; and a colored individual had put him in a hospital, where for many weeks it was an open question whether Mart would retain his internal economy or permit it to escape entirely. Of the remaining five who had protested, one had contented himself with cursing, another had had him arrested but couldn't prove anything; and the other three, having attacked Mart, had been soundly thrashed and shanghaied again.

**I**N snaring a sailor, Mart McFadden's *modus operandi* was absurdly simple. He knew ants are attracted by sugar, and experience had taught him that sailors are attracted by strong drink. So all Mart McFadden had to do was to furnish the right bait, which he did. He called it whisky, which was a libel on John Barleycorn, because Mart made the stuff himself in the basement of the City of Bergen. It consisted of raw alcohol, prune juice, water and sugar, mixed after a formula of Grandpa's and

known locally as "rot-gut," which was a very excellent and expressive name for it indeed. One drink would make a sailor dizzy; two would make him drunk; three would make him fight a locomotive—and four would put him soundly to sleep and at the mercy of Mart or his runner.

When the victim was a green hand, Mart merely enticed him into a sound-proof room with a well-padded floor in the rear of McFadden's Employment Bureau, where he was knocked out in a most scientific manner, drugged and shipped after dark. In the case of husky young men possessed of iron jaws, however, Mart took no risks. He always used brass knuckles. Two unfortunates so treated had subsequently died at sea of concussion of the brain, but as nobody was particularly interested, Mart McFadden never heard of this, and, as everybody realizes, the things one doesn't know never distress one.

**T**HE third generation of McFaddens was our hero's son, whose mother called him Marty. Marty was the sole issue of a boy-and-girl marriage. At twenty, Mart II had eloped with the daughter of a retail wood and coal dealer in the Mission, and had been a father before his twenty-first birthday.

Fortunately for Marty, his mother's alliance with his father had been predicated upon a pre-nuptial stipulation that one member of the McFadden family on the water-front was one too many, and under no circumstances was Mart to expect her to dwell there. To this the prosperous young pugilist had consented gladly, and as evidence of his sincerity he had erected a comfortable home for his bride in a very respectable residential section of the city. Casting about for added proof of his desire to please her, he had given her a deed of gift to the home the day before they were married. In consequence of this, Marty had grown up in environs far different from those of his ruthless male parent, and, under the guidance of a good and gentle mother, was, at the age of sixteen, as fine a lad as one could find anywhere.

Now, in the nature of things, Mrs. McFadden could not be kept in entire ignorance of Mart's method of making a living after his retirement from prize fighting. When he first broached the subject of taking over Grandpa's business, Mrs. McFadden, who had heard some very definite reports of Grandpa's past performances, entered a strenuous objection to her husband's engaging in the liquor business. She was over-ruled, of course but she never despaired, even after Mart, finding argument useless, resorted to sterner measures. Eventually, for the sake of peace in the family, the crimp informed her he had sold out the business and would open a regular employment bureau. This gratified his wife—she also being one of the numerous persons to whom ignorance is bliss. The sign, "McFadden's Employment Bureau," and the sight of Mart at a roll-top desk therein was all the proof she required, so Mart took out his liquor license in the name of his runner, and everybody was happy—for a while. Then Mr. McFadden, especially during the busy season, began to exhibit evidences of recent fistic encounter, and after the third trip to the hospital for repairs, Mrs. McFadden, to whom it was all a sort of wicked Chinese puzzle, gave her husband up, convinced that the water-front was a bad, bad place where her little Marty should never be permitted to go.

Marty's father, however, was privately of the opinion that the water-front and the liquor, boarding-house and crimp business was the natural heritage of his son, and for a great many years had been looking forward to that happy day when Marty, having finished his schooling, should join in his father's enterprises. He had been too busy to become intimately acquainted with Marty in the latter's formative years, but he was tremendously proud of the boy's body, which was beautiful, for Mart McFadden had acquired the habit of appraising a male by his obvious horsepower. Before the boy had reached his sixteenth birthday Mart had taught him all that was to be taught of the manly art of self-defense, and encouraged him to do a little bullying at school.

The crimp was still on the sunny side of forty. His judgment of distance was not as good as formerly, and his wind and his foot-work had deteriorated, but he was still an athlete and a dangerous man to provoke. Many men considered him as good as he had ever been, but Mart McFadden knew better. He realized that age had laid its destroying hand upon him; he was resorting with greater frequency to the use of the brass knuckles, and he longed for the day when Marty would be old enough to join forces with him and shoulder the real burdens of the business, leaving the "soft ones" to Father.

IT was a great shock to Mart McFadden to realize that under the law a man cannot begin the degradation of his son until that son acquires some reasonable excuse for a weekly shave!

At sixteen Marty was a strapping, handsome, lovable boy, devoted to his mother and a trifle suspicious and afraid of his father. He was as large as the average man and amply able to knock out the average man, but his face was still the innocent, hairless, trustful face of a baby, and Mart knew that even the tardiest of laws for the protection of juveniles frequently takes cognizance of such a face behind a water-front bar. In despair he decided to wait until Marty should be eighteen; after all, there was no use in starting the boy in too young. He confided his plans to Mrs. McFadden, who quivered but said nothing.

This disturbed Mr. McFadden. He had anticipated opposition—and had been met with silence. "Well, old woman," he said playfully, and pinched her arm, leaving a mark that would not depart for weeks, "whatja got t' say about it?"

"I was just wondering," she replied, suppressing the tears at that terrible pinch, "what we're to do with Marty in the meantime. He's finished high school, and unless he has something to do he may get into mischief."

"He might take a job in an office somewhere until he's ready to come with me," her husband suggested.

"I'm afraid an office life might stunt



his growth," she replied craftily. "Marty is such an athlete. He was captain of the senior football team in the high school, and I know he'd like to go to the state university for a few years."

"He's had too much education already," snapped the crimp.

"He has had sufficient. I admit, and I do not see any sense in spending money sending him to college. I am convinced, Mart, he wants to go there to play football, and I fail to see what use football can be to any man."

"Well, 'taint necessary f'r you to do any thinkin' on the subject," Mr. McFadden replied impressively. "All you know about raisin' a boy I could put in me eye an' it wouldn't blind me. Football's the best thing for Marty. It'll keep him in condition an' out of mischief. By gripes, I got half a notion to send him to college for two years."

"I object," Mrs. McFadden began, but Mart promptly pinched her until she writhed in agony.

"I'm runnin' this show," he warned her. "Me an' Marty'll decide the question."

Later he consulted Marty, who declared for the life of a bookkeeper.

"You better go to college for a coupla years, kid," Mart informed him.

"I don't want to go to college," Marty answered surlily.

"Just for that you go," his father roared, and it was even so. Marty and his mother had schemed well, for whenever they really wanted anything from the head of the house they had but to declare against it, whereupon it was thrust upon them. Mrs. McFadden had imparted to Marty her suspicions as to the impropriety of his father's avocation, while Marty on his part had confided to his mother his secret ambition to become a doctor. Like his ruthless parent, Marty was vastly interested in the human body. His mother, dazzled at the prospect of breaking the entail of ruffianism in the family, had wept with joy at this announcement. It would be something to have mothered a professional man!

**F**OLLOWING, therefore, the paternal mandate, Marty matriculated at the University of California, where he spent

two busy, happy years, at the end of which period he was a lovely young light heavy-weight, who looked and bore himself like a man of twenty-one. His father decided that there could be no sense in waiting longer, so accordingly he asked Marty one morning to accompany him to McFadden's Employment Bureau immediately after breakfast. Marty and his mother exchanged significant glances.

"What for, Dad?" Marty demanded.

"I'll tell you what for when I'm ready," the crimp replied, and nothing further was said until they reached the employment bureau. The derelict who cleaned out the cuspidors in The City of Bergen for the sake of the beer in the slop bucket, was sweeping out the little office when they arrived, so Mart McFadden led his son into the slaughter pen in the rear and brought in two chairs. Then he closed the door, and, from force of habit, locked it, after which he lighted a cigar and proffered one to his son.

Marty declined the cigar politely, explaining that he had discovered tobacco was bad for a man's wind.

"Suit yourself, kid," the amiable parent replied. "I look upon you as a man now, Marty." He stuck his thumbs in the armholes of his vest, leaned back and blew a prodigious cloud of smoke. "Which naturally brings me around to the statement that when a boy has grew inter a man it's up to him to take up a man's work. That's logic, aint it?"

Marty nodded soberly. "What's the plan in my case?" he demanded. He was certain he knew it, but desired to appear ignorant.

"I'm going to give you a job with me as runner, Marty," the crimp began. "You'll go out with Hoodlum Harry to the ships, an' he'll teach you how to steal crews off the inbound boats an' ship 'em on the outbound boats—at a fancy figger."

"Who is Hoodlum Harry, Dad?"

"The Hoodlum's my present runner, but he's gettin' old, an' of late I been suspectin' him o' graftin' in office. I'm almost certain he shipped two men on the *Cardigan Castle* last week an' never turned in the blood money. But he's

the finest runner on the San Francisco water-front, an' you'll learn a lot from him. In my line o' business the best way to begin is on a runnin' job. I'll pay you fifteen dollars a week. Marty, an' when you're twenty-one I'll take you in as a full partner, open an office in Astoria, Oregon, and place you in charge. There's good pickin's at Astoria, with all them big ships loadin' lumber for China an' South Africa an' Australia, an' all of 'em needin' crews. Seattle's got the Puget Sound an' Gray's Harbor trade, but a smart young feller at Astoria could horn in an' take half of it away from 'em sure."

"I don't want to be a crimp," said Marty shortly.

Crimp! Where had Marty learned that word? His father's face flushed darkly, for he hated the word *crimp* for the stigma he knew attached to it. His eyes narrowed dangerously.

"You'll be a ship's comprador, Marty," he said; "that's what you'll be. What's been good enough for me is good enough for you. I don't like this puttin' on airs."

"A ship's comprador is a crimp, and I'm not going to be a ship's comprador, sir," said Marty.

"Oh ho," Mr. McFadden replied, "you been talkin' to somebody."

"I have. I've been going to college for two years with Hector McKenzie. His father is a sea captain—"

"Old Angus McKenzie? Why, he was a blackbirder in his day. I'd like to know where old Angus McKenzie's son gets a license to brag."

"I'm not prepared to argue that question. I only know Hector McKenzie told the fellows that my father was a crimp, and he furnished a bill of particulars. It didn't help me any, and later I investigated and learned it was all true. Father, you have the reputation of being the worst man on the San Francisco water-front."

"I get the money," McFadden answered doggedly.

"It's a horrible way of getting it—shanghai-ing every poor, unfortunate, friendless devil that falls into your clutches," Marty retorted with flashing eyes. "I know all about this crimping

business of yours, and I tell you, flatly, I shall have nothing to do with it."

"You'll do what I tell you to do," his father replied evenly, his voice taking on a low, animal-like tone.

Marty shook his head. "I'm going to be a doctor," he said.

Mart McFadden sprang up with an oath. "Your mother put that notion in your head," he charged. "I'll 'tend to her for that—puttin' notions in your head an' settin' a boy against his own father. I'll learn her."

"You'd better not pinch her any more," Marty warned him. "I've realized for a long time that sooner or later I'd have to have a show-down with my own father, and I'm glad it's come. I intend to accord you all the respect possible, but I deny your right to be a brute, just because you are my father and I am your son."

Mart McFadden swore horribly. "You're givin' me orders?" he said.

"Precisely. I'm giving you orders, Father. Mother is a lady, and hereafter you treat her as such. Now listen while I tell you something. I shall not associate myself, even remotely, in your villainous enterprise, and I shall not accept another cent of your money for my support. And if I catch you abusing Mother—"

He paused. Son of a wolf that he was, the gentle strain that was his heritage from his mother bade him hesitate at the thought of a physical attack upon his own father. On his part, Mart McFadden licked his lower lip and eyed his son appraisingly.

"Marty," he said quietly, "d'ye know what I'm goin' to do with you?"

"I can guess. You're going to beat me up—until I obey."

"Smart boy. That's exactly what. I'm goin' to beat you up, an' I'm goin' to beat you in this room."

"Brass knuckles?" Marty interrogated politely, and Mart McFadden choked with fury.

"I'm goin' to beat you up—somehow—any way I feel like," he threatened.

"You're a bigger brute than I gave you credit for being," his son answered. "However, I think you had better get the idea out of your head; I'm too old to





For the first time in his eventful career the crimp was caught off his guard—for the first time an antagonist beat him to the punch!

he chastised. A moment ago you admitted I was a man. It will not do any good for you to beat me. I'm the son of a thug, but I'll never be one. Please do not force me to defend myself. Remember, you're my father."

The crimp shook his head, and with a cat-like tread advanced upon Marty. The boy looked his fiend of a father over calmly, and into his brain there flashed a line of Mart's own advice, reiterated through the years: "When you see you're goin' to have a fight, hit first—hard—an' aim for the point of the jaw." It occurred to Marty now that this was most excellent advice. He knew now he was going to have a fight—and even the unspeakable depravity of a fight with his own father did not deprive him of the power to think. He was, for the first time, seeing the animal in Mart McFadden; he knew that justice and mercy were alien to this man to whom he owed his being; so for his mother's sake he struck first—hard—and on the point of his parent's jaw!

For the first time in all his eventful career the crimp was caught off his guard—for the first time an antagonist had beaten him to the punch!

He dropped to the padded floor, sprawling grotesquely on his back. It was a perfect knock-out!

MARTY looked down at the man to whom he had but that moment been introduced. He was his father's son. In his blood had been bred the same indomitable brute courage, the same ruthlessness and quickness of decision that marked his father; only environment, a gentle if commonplace mother, and education had conspired to ruin one hundred and ninety pounds of the finest raw crimp material on the San Francisco water-front. He had never been fond of his father; on the contrary, he had always feared and distrusted him; when, after receiving the first hint of his father's traffic in human flesh and blood he had investigated, the blackness of Mart McFadden's reputation had appalled him—the bar sinister had well nigh broken the lad's proud and sensitive nature. The tears flowed freely down his face now, as he gazed at the

man sprawled out on the floor and reflected that he was flesh of Mart McFadden's flesh, and blood of his blood.

Presently the crimp began to blink and stir, and Marty bethought himself of the safety that lay in flight. When a son strikes his father, the relationship ceases—at least, according to Marty's code, it did; so he stepped cautiously across the recumbent form of his ferocious parent and essayed to open the door. It was locked.

While the boy was pondering over his predicament, Mart McFadden sat up. He saw his son and leered at him wickedly for an instant; then his face relaxed into a cunning and propitiatory grin.

"Well, Son," he said sheepishly and a trifle thickly, "you hung one on the old man that time, didn't you? Beat me to the punch, eh?"

"I followed the advice you always gave me," Marty replied coldly. "I shall never forget that I had to do that, sir. It was terrible to have to strike you. But I'm pretty nearly a man now—and you've got to treat me like a son. I mustn't be beaten up like any friendless unfortunate."

"Huh!" retorted the crimp. "That was a tough one, kid. Phew! I see them stars yet."

"Please unlock the door and let me out," Marty requested. The crimp started. "Oh, yes," he muttered, "that's so. The door's locked." He sat rubbing his bruised chin reflectively.

"Well, Marty," he announced presently, "you win. When a man can't handle his own son I guess his authority ceases. You're a man. I've got to allow that. An' bein' a man, suppose me an' you go to the City o' Bergen an' bury the hatchet in a little drink? You're goin' to forgive the old man, aint you, Marty?" And he held out his hand.

Marty grasped it eagerly. "Do you think you could forget the horrible business, Dad?" he queried, and there was a sob in his voice. Mart McFadden nodded as the boy helped him to his feet.

"We'll have a little drink together an' call it square, Marty. You win," he answered. "I need a jolt after the punch you slipped over. Me an' you aint ever

had a drink together, man an' man, have we, Marty?"

"Let's dispense with the drink," Marty suggested, but his father was obdurate. "Kid," he protested, "it's the custom on the water-front that when two men have mixed it an' made up, they shake hands an' have a drink together. This is your first an' last trip to the water-front, I guess, so conform to custom." And Mart McFadden did what he had not done for many years. He threw his arm across his son's broad shoulders and gave him a little squeeze. Marty returned the pressure with a grizzly bear hug, and laughed. His father unlocked the door, and they passed around to the City of Bergen, where an alert barkeeper hastened to learn their pleasure.

"A little o' the old private stock," the crimp replied. In answer to the barkeeper's inquiring look Marty ordered a short beer; then he touched his glass to his father's and immediately tossed off the drink.

WHEN Marty McFadden awoke he was in unfamiliar surroundings. The room in which he had slept was filled with a variety of noxious smells, chief among which was an odor of unclean men and decayed animal matter. The bunk in which he lay seemed to be moving up and down, and all about him the wall timbers gave forth protesting creaks and groans; from somewhere in the distance a bellowing voice was shouting: "Out of it! Out of it! I say. Up with you, bully!" while the owner of the voice kneaded Marty's body much as a baker kneads a mess of bread.

"What's wanted?" Marty demanded. "Quit mauling me, I say."

"All hands on deck!" the bellowing voice replied. "Lively now, if you don't want a bucket of slops over you."

Marty was clean. Though somewhat groggy and with the feeling that he was somehow detached from himself, he had a vague notion that if he showed the slightest contempt for slops, slops would be his portion. Moreover, the horrid stinks of his surroundings were most nauseating, and the daylight streaming through an opening in the ceiling convinced him that in that direction lay

pure air. He crawled out of his bunk, and steered by a firm grip at his collar was shoved up a sort of combination ladder and staircase into the light of day. He was blinded for an instant, and dazedly demanded to be informed where he was.

"You're aboard the steam whaler *Shandon Belle*, my son," the same booming voice informed him. "an' hereafter say 'sir' when you go to ask a question o' me."

"Who the devil are you—sir?" Marty demanded, thinking it was all a queer sort of nightmare.

"I'm Mr. Tom Nye, the chief kicker o' this packet, an' don't you ever forget it."

"But how did I come to be here, Mr. Nye?"

"You come aboard at the end of a rope, my son, along o' half a dozen other savages—blind, fighting drunk. The scrapin's o' the beach, they was."

"But who sent me here?"

"Mart McFadden, of course. Don't you remember signin' up for a cruise on the *Shandon Belle*?" There was an ironical note in Mr. Nye's voice; he laughed unpleasantly.

Marty shook his head and gazed about him, but since there was nothing to see except a greenish expanse of sea, he turned to the man who called himself Tom Nye.

"Well," he said thickly, "what do you make of it, Mr. Nye?"

"I dunno," Mr. Nye replied. "If I was you I'd go to the galley an' ask the cook for about six cups of black coffee. Somebody's been givin' you knock-out drops, young man. If I was to let go your collar you'd fall."

"I guess," said Marty McFadden, "I've been shanghaied!"

"I wouldn't be a bit surprised," echoed the genial Mr. Nye. "What do you think you're goin' to do about it, ch?" And he gave Marty a vicious shaking.

"Oh," said Marty, when he could get his breath. "I'll do my work and make the best of it, Mr. Nye. I'm a bit of a greenhorn at this game. Also I'm seasick. Perhaps if you'd let me lie down a couple of hours I might feel better."

"Well, now," replied Mr. Nye, "that's what I call takin' a sensible view o' the situation. Hoodlum Harry said you was dangerous an' to handle you with gloves."

"Oh, no," Marty answered drearly. "I know when I'm licked. I wont make any trouble, Mr. Nye. I've heard about men who were shanghaied, and it never did them any good to protest. What name did they ship me under?"

"Tom Brown," said Mr. Nye promptly.

"Tom Brown goes," Marty replied, and Mr. Nye let go his coat collar, whereupon he subsided to the deck and went sound asleep. When he awoke again he had a headache and it was almost dark, and Mr. Nye was drenching his head and face with a bucket of salt water. He had forgotten by this time who Mr. Nye was, so he sprang up and administered to that individual, within the space of half a minute, the most substantial thrashing the capable fellow had ever heard of. He had no sooner polished off Mr. Nye than the second mate was upon him, assisted by the bo'sun. A blow to the jaw of each stretched them beside the unfortunate Nye, and then the third mate and the old man himself, assisted by the cook, closed in on him. Marty was doing nicely, despite his headache and the tremendous odds, when the second assistant engineer tapped him on the head from behind with a spanner, and the fight was done.

When Marty McFadden awoke for the third time he was in irons. He thought the matter over for two days and then desired the cook to notify the skipper that the war was over, so far as he was concerned. The skipper sent word by Mr. Nye, who came with the key to unlock the irons, that he was delighted to hear of it.

"You're a wonderful fighter, Tommy Brown," Mr. Nye remarked, as he inserted the key in the leg irons.

"I'm sorry I walloped you, Mr. Nye. Please do not hold it against me," Marty pleaded.

"Do your work, Brown, an' I wont. Tackle me again and I'll shoot you an' feed you to the fishes."



It was a beautiful morning in the early fall, three years later, that the proprietor of McFadden's Employment Bureau looked up from his roll-top desk. A tall, sea-bitten young giant, with a thick black beard, leaned on his elbows on the counter and returned his look.

"Well, Father, dear Father, I've come home to die," the stranger declared facetiously. "Aren't you going to say something nice to the returned prodigal?"

"Hello, Marty," the crimp replied. "So you're back, eh? Bless me, I didn't know you behind all them black whiskers." And he stepped to the counter and held out his hand. It was seized and warmly shaken, with the additional information from Marty that he was tickled to death to see his father once more.

"Well, well," said Mart McFadden, "an' so you're back. How do you like whalin'?"

"Three years in the Arctic an' the South Seas is quite a liberal education, Father," Marty replied grinning. "It hasn't hurt me any, although I've been through hell, it seems to me. They signed me on 'lay,' and I was discharged this morning."

Mart McFadden grinned. Well he knew the portion of the sailor who ships aboard a whaler "on a lay" of the catch.

"I suppose Dirty Munro" (for thus was the skipper of the *Shandon Belle* known to the front) "gave you a dollar for your three years' cruise and kicked you overside."

Marty nodded, and the parent rubbed his hands with satisfaction.

"Well, Marty," he continued. "Now that you're back, what do you intend doin' with yourself?"

"Well, I thought perhaps you might be holding that crimping job open for me, Father," the son retorted impudently. "If you're still agreeable, I am. I've

learned a lot about the sea and sailors and the money that's to be made out of them; also I'm broke and I'm not as particular as I used to be. How about it?"

Mart McFadden's face was almost tender as he laid a hand on his boy's shoulder.

"I had to do it, Marty," he said. "You was all swelled up, like a skinned horse, with conceit an' high-toned notions; you was ashamed of your old man an' you was foolish enough to knock me out an' think you could get away with it. I slipped you some chloral in your beer, my son, an' then I shipped you. Dirty Munro give me fifty dollars for you." He laughed good humoredly. "Lord," he said, "there aint nothin' like a winter on Herschel Island an' cold work in an open boat to harden a man; an' there aint nothin' like Tom Nye an' the cock-roaches in the fo'castle o' that stinkin' *Shandon Belle* to take the high an' mighty airs away from him."

"I've admitted it's a liberal education," Marty replied. "Don't rub it in. Give me a hundred dollars and let me get some clothes and a bath and a couple of square meals fit for human consumption. Then make up those partnership papers and I'm with you—on one condition."

"What's the condition?"

"You pay me regular sailor wages for every month of the three years I've been aboard the *Shandon Belle*."

"An' if I don't?"

"I'll pinch you till you do."

Mart McFadden laughed aloud. "I'll pay," he declared. "By Gawd, I got a son after all, not a dude."

"How's Mother?" Marty asked.

"Worryin' a little, I guess, but otherwise well an' happy. She's left me—damn her. Sold the house an' let I give her for a weddin' present, an' went to live with her old man. She's got me under bonds to keep the peace or I'd—"

"Give me the hundred and prepare the partnership papers," Marty interrupted. "I've waited three years. I can't be a doctor now, and Tom Nye took all the fine notions out of me. I guess crimping isn't so bad after all."

The crimp looked at his son with the closest resemblance to affection that was

possible with one of his wolfish nature: "Gawd!" he muttered absently, "aint he a beauty!" He continued to admire his splendid son until the latter was once more forced to remind his father of the necessity for civilized raiment and food; whereupon the crimp went to his safe and counted out a thousand dollars.

"That's three years wages as wages go on a whaler," he said. "Fix yourself up, kid, an' come around when you're ready."

Marty slapped his father affectionately across the back, took the money and disappeared. A week later he reported at McFadden's Employment Bureau, and Mart celebrated by taking his son up town to a French dinner. They had a jolly little spree together that night, and the following day Marty went to work as a runner for his father. He was a clever runner, and the first day on the job he stole eleven men out of the German bark *Hans Winkelried*, just arrived, and shipped them out the same night, all thoroughly "pickled," on another German, the *Willie Rickmers*. When Mart commended his activities and suggested that his son fork over the blood money, however, Marty shook his head.

"I told you I wanted a full partnership, Dad," he explained, "and you haven't come through with it yet. No probationary period as a runner for me. I'm sailor-wise right now."

"You ought to work awhile for your partnership, Marty," the crimp suggested.

"Isn't the business coming to me in the long run, anyhow?" Marty demanded. "Why wait? You can't handle these tough birds any more, and you ought to realize it. The first thing you know you will be killing a man with those brass knuckles, and then you'll lose the business anyhow. It's up to me to take over the rough work, and if I'm going to do that I want a partnership. McFadden and Son would look good on a pale blue letterhead."

"An' if I don't agree," Mart taunted the boy.

Marty grinned. "My name is Martin McFadden," he replied, "and if I set up in the crimping business for myself, I'll

cut the ground out from under you in six months. Dad. Everybody knows Martin McFadden, the crimp," he added meaningly.

"You win," Mart declared, hugely delighted, and forthwith they repaired to an attorney's office, where the partnership agreement was drawn up and duly signed and witnessed. From the lawyer's office they went to the bank, where Marty's signature was registered, in order that he might draw checks against the firm's account, and from the bank they returned to McFadden's Employment Bureau.

WHEN the day's business was accomplished, Mart and his son sat in the Employment Bureau building air castles. The crimp had been so busy sketching once more his favorite plan for an office in Astoria that it was seven o'clock and the neighborhood of Drumm and East Streets deserted before he was aware of it. He glanced at his watch.

"Let's go to dinner, Marty," he suggested, and rose to let down the lid of his desk. The moment his back was turned Marty silently threw open the door leading to the sound-proof "slaughter pen" in the rear of the office, and as his father withdrew the key from the desk lock, Marty's arms closed around him, holding him helpless. In an instant he had backed into the sound-proof room, still carrying his parent, who, thinking his son was wrestling good-naturedly with him, had made no outcry, contenting himself merely with a half-hearted struggle, the while he marveled at the strength in Marty's long arms.

The moment he was fairly inside the slaughter pen Marty released his father, and shoved him violently across the room. Then he switched on the light, closed the door and locked it, put the key in his pocket and faced his parent.

"Well," he said quietly, "what do you think of it now?"

"Whadja mean?" Mart McFadden demanded. "What you up to, Marty, handlin' your old man like a common savage?"

"Well," said Marty, "three years ago you shanghai'd me. You had the unspeakable depravity to shanghai your

own son, and by that act you killed in my heart all the affection and loyalty due you as the author of my being. You sold me for fifty dollars—sold me into slavery and filth and suffering and brutality, because I dared to assert my natural human right to be a gentleman. You have never regarded me as your son but rather as your property—so you shipped me on a whaler to make a man out of me, according to your formula. You have stolen three years of my precious youth; you have made me old and wicked at twenty-one. You have beaten my mother and broken her heart, as you have broken the heart of every friendless poor devil you could entice into this slaughter pen. You are probably a murderer—and you ought to be punished. You are going to be, and I am going to punish you."

"How?" demanded Mart McFadden, and in his tones there was an ominous, contemptuous growl.

"I'm going to shanghai you, my delectable parent, even as you shanghai'd me. I've arranged it all with Tom Nye of the *Shandon Belle*. The *Belle* has discharged her cargo and outfitted for another cruise in the South Seas, and in the spring she'll head north for the Arctic again. Tom Nye has promised me that when the *Shandon Belle* returns from the South Seas you will be manacled in that filthy hold until she puts to sea again north bound. You've got three years of hell ahead of you, Dad, because I'm going to sell you for fifty dollars to Dirty Munro. I told him who I was and why I had been shipped, and he said that while he'd enjoy the son, his cup of joy would never overflow until he should see Tom Nye driving the father. So I promised I'd accommodate him, for Dirty Munro isn't so dirty that he hasn't a rude sense of justice.

"So off you'll go to the *Shandon Belle* this night, my healthy, youthful, athletic father, and I wish you joy of the cruise. While you're gone in that rotten whaleship I'll be rehabilitating myself. My first act as your partner will be to sell the City of Bergen to Hoodlum Harry. Then I will close up this office, draw from the bank the forty thousand dollars, more or less, you have been accumulating, and keep it for the



use of Mother and myself. When you fail to pay the taxes on your real estate and it reverts to the state for non-payment, I shall buy it in: since you will be a pauper when you return (if you ever do) you will not be able to redeem the property, and in due course I shall sell it for Mother's account. That was a very bad job you did to-day, giving me the right to sign checks on your bank account, although I do not feel any qualms at looting you. I can never forget how you betrayed me under the guise of fatherly affection. You played the most heartless, terrible game in the world with me—and now I'm going to play it with you. There's a cleaning job to be done and it ought to be done by a McFadden; I cannot leave the task to a stranger."

HE advanced upon Mart McFadden, and the latter threw himself into an attitude of defense. Marty noticed that the brass knuckles gleamed on his father's right hand, and his attack was cautious. Round and round the sound-proof room they stepped, Marty leading, dodging, cuffing and worrying the crimp, but never hurting him. Try as desperately as he would, Mart's fist could not connect with the boy's jaw, and presently, what with his futile fanning of the air, his breath began to come in short, gurgling gasps. It was only then that he realized Marty's plan was to tire him out without hurting him, and with a grunt he rushed into a clinch. He would carry the fight to Marty—make it a real, rough-and-tumble, water-front battle, in the hope that an opportunity would present itself for him to put home the crashing short right-hand jab for which he had been famous in his youth.

"I thought you'd do that," Marty said pleasantly. "In fact, I wanted you to."

He wrapped his long arms around his father, pinning the latter's arms to his side; then he squeezed. Mart McFadden's face grew redder and redder as he struggled furiously to work his arms loose. In vain. Slowly Marty's grip tightened on his father until it seemed the latter's ribs must surely be crushed in. The crimp's tongue began to protrude; his eyes rolled in agony and ter-

rible, impotent rage, as slowly, very slowly, Marty bent him backward until he was almost doubled; then suddenly releasing his hold, he permitted the crimp to collapse on the floor.

In an instant Marty had turned him on his face and was kneeling on the middle of his back, holding both hands. Before Mart McFadden could recover his breath, his hands were manacled behind him, his legs were tied securely at knees and ankles, and a bandana handkerchief was thrust into his mouth.

"Foolish to play the game with me, Dad," Marty remarked pleasantly. "You're getting old, and thanks to my three years on the *Shandon Belle* I'm as hard as pig-iron. I think now I'll put you to sleep until I can get you aboard and safe under Mr. Nye's watchful eye."

He took a small sponge from his pocket, saturated it with a mixture of ether and chloroform, and applied it to Mart McFadden's nose. Shortly thereafter Mr. McFadden slept; whereupon Marty unbound him and removed the handcuffs, after which he stepped to the corner and reconnoitered East Street for a block in each direction. It was quite dark by this time, and from the old wooden sidewalks no footsteps resounded; so Marty picked his parent off the floor and ran with him across East Street to the shadow of Broadway dock, where he lowered Mart into a Whitehall boat that was bumping gently against the piling.

HALF an hour later Dirty Munro, the skipper of the *Shandon Belle*, was chuckling pleasantly as he watched Mr. Nye and a boat-steerer hauling Mart McFadden in over the rail. A moment later Marty came up the Jacob's ladder.

"Marty," said Dirty Munro, "this is what I call a rich joke on the old man. It's comin' to him for the way he treated you—and you as fine a lad as ever put an iron in a whale. I'll see to it that the old skunk gets all the side degrees before he sets foot ashore again."

"His old man shanghaied me in '72," said Mr. Nye, as he eased Mart to the greasy deck. "Your grandfather was King of the Crimps, Marty. He's responsible for me bein' a sailor. If that

old thief hadn't shanghaied me I might have amounted to somethin'."

"There's three men up for'rd," said the boat-steerer, "that's particular anxious to meet Mart McFadden on equal terms. They'll try to make the cruise as pleasant for him as possible."

"Yes—they will," Tom Nye laughed. "Don't forget this crimp can still thrash any man in this ship except me. Thanks to that assortment o' fancy punches Marty taught me while he was with us, I'm safe." He turned to Marty. "I don't suppose we'll see you when we come back, will we, son?"

"No," Marty replied soberly. "I'm going to Europe to study medicine; also I think I'll change my name. I'm not proud of it, you know, and neither is Mother." He shook hands with them all. "I'm obliged to you for your generous help, boys," he finished, as he went over the rail. "Take good care of Father and make a man out of him."

"No fear, Marty," Dirty Munro promised; "he'll be a changed savage when he hits the beach in Frisco town again."

Which was the truest thing Dirty Munro ever said, for when Mart McFad-

den returned to his old haunts three years later and found Hoodlum Harry in charge of the City of Bergen, he leaned on the bar and wept in his misery and wretchedness. Here where he had been king he was now a friendless, penniless outcast; and when he demanded of Hoodlum Harry an accounting of the business, Hoodlum Harry threw him bodily into the street, where a little band of Salvation Army people returning from the Mission in Jackson Street found him, sobbing and cursing because his heart was broken and his manhood despoiled.

Mart was very miserable, so miserable, in fact, that he permitted the Salvation Army people to lead him to their barracks and endeavor to make a Christian out of him. Whether they succeeded or not is a mystery, although it is a fact that Mart McFadden has been beating the bass drum for the Army along the water-front ever since, and every little while he essays a sermon, taking for his text Luke 1:52: "He hath put down the mighty from their seats and exalted them of low degree."

Hoodlum Harry swears Dirty Munro and Tom Nye will get their reward in heaven.





## A Complete Résumé of the Opening Chapters of "THE ISLAND OF SURPRISE"

**C**YRUS TOWNSEND BRADY has begun in "The Island of Surprise" the best of the many fascinating novels that have come from his pen. It is a story of love, adventure and dramatic surprises.

Robert Lovell, the chief character, is the son of Godfrey Lovell, a Wall Street capitalist. He has finished college and spent considerable time in traveling. His father deems it time for him to settle down. The young man chooses literature—the writing of novels—for his life work, rather than a part in any of his parent's various enterprises. Godfrey Lovell, at first rather skeptical, finally enters into the scheme, and even consents to lend Robert his most confidential secretary, Dorothy Arden, to "take" his first novel as it is dictated.

Miss Arden is a beauty, in a rather cold, austere way. Her father went bankrupt in a contest with Godfrey Lovell in "the street." Recognizing that Lovell fought fair, she respected him, and after gaining employment in his offices, worked with such faithfulness and ability that she gained his confidence.

Secretly she has always been interested in Robert Lovell, but outwardly she has maintained reserve toward him. At the beginning of the dictation of the novel she continues this pose, but as the story progresses it becomes apparent that young Lovell is modeling his heroine from her, and his hero from himself. Unconsciously he is making love to her through the pages of the book.

On the day the last of the story is dictated, Miss Arden, swept from her reserve, shows she is in love with the young writer. He believes there is an answering love in his heart. Miss Arden

slips on a rug and is stunned by the fall. When she recovers she is in Lovell's arms, and he is pouring words of love into her ears.

When Miss Arden reveals to young Lovell that his father had planned to marry him to Dorothy Cassilis, daughter of the Chicago financier who is his ally, Robert, in a burst of resentment, decides that he and Miss Arden shall be married at once. They hurry to the Little Church Around the Corner, and the ceremony is performed.

They return to the office to find that Godfrey Lovell has suffered a stroke which will necessitate his giving up all business. At his physician's orders, he will take a cruise to the South Seas in his yacht.

Robert Lovell must go to Chicago to complete a deal which Godfrey Lovell and Daniel Cassilis are putting through.

He goes, reluctantly, and acquits himself with credit. Miss Cassilis is not in Chicago, having gone to Albany to visit friends, so he does not meet her; but he has been thinking of her more than a man wholly in love with another woman would do.

Robert's father joins him in Chicago, en route to San Francisco, to board the yacht, and insists on the son accompanying him on the cruise. Robert makes a hurried trip to New York to see his wife, but finds her apartment vacant. The only clue to her whereabouts is the fragments of a telegram, which, when pieced together, make only the words: "Can't do without....need you....take first train....meet me."

Young Lovell is stunned. He decides to engage detectives in Chicago, and on his return from the cruise, to find the man who sent that telegram and settle with him.



NOW TURN TO THE STORY: IT BEGINS ON THE NEXT PAGE

# The ISLAND

By Cyrus  
Townsend Brady

Author of "The Island of Regeneration," etc.

"NUMBER  
THREE"

Chapter  
VIII

**T**HE anxious and angry Robert Lovell had not spent any time at all in his section on the Limited. The buffet and dining cars alone were honored by his presence. The first was sacred from the intrusion of women, but in the second his attention had been divided between his dinner and his opposite. He had gone in to dinner rather late and had found but one seat vacant. This was at one of the tables for two. He was in no mood for feminine society, but the young woman who had the other seat was so extraordinarily pretty that he faced her with cheerful resignation at least.

Users of language deplore the fact that, although there are five hundred thousand or more possibilities in the way of words in the latest dictionary, there are so few really of value to the

romancer.  
*Prettiness* does not express the gracious charm, the bewitching appeal, the undoubted fascination of the delightful lady of the dining car. But what other word is there to describe her? She was not beautiful. Taking feature by feature and analyzing them, she fell far short of classic standards in every detail. Nothing was absolutely perfect about her,—not even her nose,—and yet there was a certain fine harmony in the various features and qualities assembled that well nigh spelled perfection. The result defied analysis. Yet Robert Lovell thought he had rarely seen so engaging a creature.

She was rather over than under the middle height, he decided, as he respectfully scrutinized her over the menu-card, and slenderly built, with abundant indications of exquisite grace when in motion. He was vaguely conscious that while her attire was not, in the words of *Polonius*, in the least gaudy, it was as rich as anybody could properly wear on a train.

The forlorn and distraught Lovell would have been glad indeed of an opportunity to make the acquaintance of this delightful young person who sat opposite him so demurely eating her dinner. Lovely woman is not always

# of SURPRISE

Illustrated by  
Walter Tittle



lovely when she eats. When she is, it bespeaks either a most exquisite refinement of manner and a like daintiness of appetite, or an absolute infatuation on the part of the observer.

All Mr. Lovell could do was to watch her covertly, but this he did with much satisfaction.

He had essayed a few pleasant and conventional civilities, such as gratifying an obvious need for the salt shaker, or the cream pitcher, or the sugar bowl; receiving in return gracious thanks in a voice singularly adjusted in its harmonies to the speaker. It was with genuine regret that he observed the lady finish her delicate and well chosen meal and, with a slight conventional bow in acknowledgment of his courtesies, leave the table and her new admirer.

At first he intended to follow her into the sleeping car which she had entered, but upon reflection he decided not to do so. In the first place, he recollected just in time that he was a married man, although he was fiercely resentful of that fact and intended to break the tie at the earliest opportunity. Warned by the consequences of his precipitation on a previous occasion, he concluded that the conservative course with regard to women was the one he ought to follow. Incidentally, although he was as opposed as ever to the attempt to dispose of his own fortune and person, he recognized some sort of tie or bond connecting him with Miss Cassilis, which further acted as a restraint.

When he had finished his own dinner he resolutely went back to the buffet car, lighted a cigar and was soon plunged in deep thought in which the business deal, the approaching cruise, his run-away wife, his proposed bride

and this delightful stranger, whom he whimsically called "number three," were curiously mixed. He kept to himself and his thoughts until a late hour, when he

determined to retire. Such had been the hurry in which he had made arrangements that he had been unable to procure a compartment for himself. Indeed, the best thing available had been a section in the Boston sleeper. This had not been attached to the train until it reached Albany.

He found it difficult to go to sleep. There were too many emotions running through his mind, and although he cursed himself for a fool, sleep did not come any more quickly than it would have to a wiser man. The more he thought of it, the more inexplicable and wrath-provoking was the flight of his wife. If he had loved her as he should he would have been so filled with jealousy and anxiety that he could have thought of nothing else. But the emotions that overcame him were as much due to wounded pride and affronted *amour propre* as to regret or grief. These, however, were sufficient to keep him in a white heat of angry passion whenever he thought about what he now definitely concluded was the only explanation of the torn telegram—namely that

she had gone off with some other love and had abandoned him.

That he did not think all the time of his wife was proof of the quality of his sentiments. Imaginations of Dorothy Cassilis and remembrances of the unknown "number three" would obtrude themselves.

For another thing, he was resentful at being compelled to take that cruise to the South Seas. He decided that if it were possible, he would shirk it. He must find his wife and "the man." Yet he knew there was little chance to effect his release without an explanation which might kill his father, and he blamed himself for being unwilling to minister to his father's needs by going with him. But how could he find his wife's lover and punish him if he had to leave the United States? And if Dorothy Cassilis went on the cruise, how could he get along with her under the circumstances, and what would be the result of their association?

Robert Lovell, since the unexplained departure of his wife, had taken a sudden cynical view of women, one that he had never entertained before, but he had sense enough to see the possibilities of that long cruise on that ship. He had been on ships with girls before. He knew it would be annoying and embarrassing. If he could only have time to get a decree of annulment, since the marriage was that in name only! Perhaps he could delay his father's departure until—and then "number three" would obtrude her pretty face. Dorothy Arden, Dorothy Cassilis and this unknown! He wondered what car she was in and cursed himself again for being a fool to think of any woman in the world after the way he had been treated by one.

He saw himself in a very noble light, as having sacrificed everything on a point of honor to marry his father's stenographer—and that he now so characterized her was also important. He could not imagine Miss Cassilis as a stenographer, and he even chuckled aloud at the idea of "number three" undertaking such work. What havoc she would play in an office!

Then his thoughts took another wan-

dering turn. Miss Arden had been so absolutely cold; she had never shown, save to his kind, discerning old father and to himself, any human side. She had been "shut up in her own personality as in a prison," and only he had held the key, at least so he had fondly thought until that day. What was the clue to her disappearance? And did he love her or hate her, after all?

WELL, by and by, with this jumble of confused thoughts stirring in his aching head he fell into a troubled sleep. Late to sleep is generally early to wake, especially if anxiety has delayed the sweet oblivion of the night. When he lifted the curtain the next morning and saw the sun already risen he decided to get up. He had no mind to lie and think the same thoughts that had so perturbed him the day and night before. He rose, washed and dressed himself, and came back to his berth, which had not, of course, been made up, to leave his toilet-case preparatory to going forward to the buffet car.

As he passed through the long aisle there was no evidence of life behind any of the green curtains except those of the section opposite his own. These were bulging in such a way as to indicate that the occupant of the section had left the berth and was standing in the aisle. Instinctively glancing downward, he saw the point of a tiny slipper. The curtain was moving in various ways, as if the person pushing it out in the aisle were putting on some sort of garment over her shoulders. The little slipper told him it was a woman. After a casual glance he reflected that he had enough of women, and turning to his own berth, before which the curtains were flung back, he replaced the toilet-case in his bag, locked it and stood up. Suddenly he was thrown violently forward against the steel partition that divided the berths. Then he was hurled sideways against the window, which shattered under the violent blow of his arm.

Something had happened. The car, which had been running at the usual high rate of speed necessitated by the short schedule of the Limited, ground along the ties, apparently running on the

wheels on the right side while the other rose in the air. The speed had been checked with terrible suddenness, and in no time, with a smashing crash, the car went over on the side on which he stood. There was a wild accompaniment of ejaculations, yells and shrieks, succeeded by groans and cries of pain.

There was no man on earth quicker to recover than Robert Lovell; moreover, he had been trained in many a game to keep his feet and—more important—his head. Although he had been thrown backward and sideways he would have been able, but for one obstacle, to regain his feet without difficulty, as the car came to a stop. That obstruction was a woman partly dressed, wrapped in a silken kimono, who had evidently been standing in the section opposite him and whom the first wild whirl of the car had thrown into his arms. It was fortunate for her that he had stood just where he had, for she had been so suddenly hurled upon him that he had caught her as they both went down and had broken her fall.

She lay in his arms, paralyzed with fear. She had not even uttered a scream. He struggled from beneath her and laid her gently down on the side of the car, which had now become its floor. He thought for a moment that she had fainted. He bent over her regardless of the fact that his feet crashed through the window where he had stepped on the glass. He brushed the bright hair away from her face and discovered who she was. Her blue eyes were wide open: she had not fainted, but had been simply scared speechless. Recognizing her, he thoughtlessly exclaimed:

"Number three!" And then, "Are you hurt?"

"I don't know; I believe not," came the breathless answer.

"Well then," he said, lifting her up, "I think we have nothing immediate to fear. This is a steel car; there is no danger of fire."

But by this time pandemonium raged in the car. Scared men and women gathered themselves, and those who were not seriously hurt rushed frantically to the exits. It was all Robert could do to keep himself and the woman from being tram-

pled upon. As soon as he felt free to exert himself, however, he lifted her up, remarking that it was no time to stand on ceremony, as the car appeared to be on the bank of a river, into which it might slide any minute.

He placed her on the arm of the berth from which she had just fallen. He seized his walking stick and broke the windows above her head on her side of the car, which was now the top. He cleared the sash of glass. It was not difficult for him to climb through, and it was not much more of a task to reach down, take her by the shoulders and lift her through also. To get her down to the ground which sloped above the car was quite easy. Still carrying her, although she protested she could walk, he went up the bank across the tracks from which the train had been hurled by a broken rail, set her down under a tree and turned to go back.

"Where are you going? You must not leave me!" the girl besought him.

"There are other people in the car," answered Lovell. "See how it is poised on the bank there. It may fall into the river at any moment. I must do what I can."

"You won't go into the car again, will you?" pleaded the girl, and there was that in her voice which caused him to look at her quickly.

"Don't worry about me; I'll be back safe and sound in a short time."

He broke away from her detaining grasp, looked back and saw that she had risen to her feet and was staring at him. He hurried back to the car and rendered valuable assistance to the trainmen in getting out the more desperately wounded. He was actually the last man to leave the car, which finally rolled down the bank and fell into the river with a mighty splash. And not till then did he return to the girl under the tree.

**F**ORTUNATELY, the air brakes had been quickly applied, and the stout steel cars had withstood the shock. There were few badly injured, and one or two physicians who happened to be on the train were giving them adequate attention. No persons except the train crew



"I will tell you," he began. "The first woman is some one who—who—wanted to marry me," he went on lamely, haughty resentment. "The second woman is a girl other people wanted could not fail to detect the relief in



his face flushing with embarrassment. "Ah!" exclaimed the girl, her face flushing in turn, with a singular look of me to marry," he continued. "Oh," breathed the girl, and even he her voice. "And number three is—"



and Lovell were fully clothed. Most of the women were even more thinly clad than the young girl he had rescued. She was at least shod and partly dressed.

"I thought you were never coming," she began. "You can't think what relief I experienced when I saw your head and shoulders rising out of that window. You have saved my life. I am sure I should have been killed had it not been for you."

"Nonsense," said Lovell; "it was nothing; but I'm glad that I happened to be there."

"Didn't I hurt you when I plunged down upon you?"

"Not at all. I'm as right as I ever was. It was a flying tackle you made."

"Yes, wasn't it? I have seen them at the games but I never expected to make one myself."

She blushed at the thought of the intimate relationship that had been established between them, at the recollection that she had been precipitated in his arms, that he had lifted her up, dragged her through the window, lowered her to the ground and carried her like a helpless baby to the hill.

"I take it that you are not hurt," he said, "although I know some brave people who laugh even when they are suffering with pain."

She gathered her loose garments about her, almost for the first time conscious of their unconventionality under his direct if entirely respectful scrutiny.

"I don't feel very much shaken up," she answered. "Is anyone seriously wounded?"

"I believe not, fortunately," was the answer, "and it's a miracle, too, for that was a violent stop and three cars are off the track, two in the river."

"Oh," said the girl, suddenly looking down at her kimono, which was of light colors and made of filmy, rich embroidered silk, "look at that."

"That's blood stain," he said, following her gaze. "You must be hurt."

"No, no, it's you," was the answer.

He inspected himself quickly. He had not taken time to think of himself before, and he observed for the first time that his coat sleeve was torn and covered with blood.

"Well by Jove!" he exclaimed, lifting and turning his arm until he could see his elbow. "I'm awfully sorry I spoiled your kimono."

"Spoiled my kimono!" was the answer. "You are wounded!"

"It is nothing. I remember now that when I thrust my elbow through the window I did feel a cut, but it's only a scratch; don't bother about it."

"Let me see it."

She drew her kimono about her and stepped closer to him.

"Look here," said the man as she seized his arm gently but firmly, "you'd better not. One of the doctors will fix it up presently."

But she would not be stopped. She slit the sleeve of his coat, which was already torn, and did the same with his shirt sleeves. She turned them both back and discovered an ugly looking gash in his arm.

"Oh," she said, "how horrible—and for me!"

"I have been worse hurt in play," he said, not contradicting her, though how it was for her he could not see. "Just let it alone; it will be all right presently. I'm so sorry to have spoiled your pretty dress."

That did not bulk very large in the young woman's eyes, apparently, for she immediately rent a long strip from it and approached the wounded arm again.

"I can at least bandage it," she said. "We learned how to apply first aid bandages at college. There,"—as she suited action to word,—"now you must go to one of the physicians and have him give it better treatment."

"Presently," returned the young man, after gratefully thanking her. "I met you last night in the diner," he continued. "Am I not to know to whom I am so much indebted for this kindness?"

"You are Mr. Robert Lovell of New York, are you not?" she asked him suddenly.

"I am, although how you know it, is—"

"I knew you would be on this train," said the girl, "and I recognized you from some pictures I have seen in the papers in connection with a big railroad enterprise you were conducting, and the ini-



tials on your bag confirmed my guess."

"You have, therefore," said he, "an advantage over me which I hope you will be willing to surrender."

"I will on one condition."

"And what is that?"

"What did you mean when you said 'Number three!' when I fell into your arms in the berth yonder?"

Now that was a question he could hardly answer.

"Why, I—"

He stared at her in dismay.

"Well," he stammered, "to tell the truth—"

"It is evident that is not what you intend to do," said the young lady, and thus challenged, Mr. Lovell spoke boldly.

"Sometimes into the life of a man women come."

"So I have heard."

"And you are—"

He stopped again; it sounded too absurd.

"I am the third woman who has some relationship to you, am I not?" She pressed the question.

"You are at least a possibility, after this morning," he answered gravely.

"And the other two? I know that I have no right to ask, but I am really interested—for reasons which you may discover some day."

The strangeness of their positions, the sudden intimacy which had arisen between them, the entire unconventionality of the situation, perhaps warranted her in asking the explanation of his unconsidered remark, he thought.

"I will tell you," he began. "The first woman is some one who—who—wanted to marry me," he went on lamely, his face flushing with embarrassment both because his statement was only half true, and because his remark seemed so conceited.

"Ah!" exclaimed the girl, her face flushing in turn, with a singular look of haughty resentment.

"The second woman is a girl other people wanted me to marry," he continued.

"Oh," breathed the girl, and even he could not fail to detect the relief in her voice.

"And number three is—"

"I presume I am she?"

"You have guessed well."

There was a long pause. Robert Lovell at last lifted his head and looked at her. She was smiling a little. He took heart and repeated his original question thus:

"Now, having complied with your conditions, may I not have the honor of your acquaintance?"

"Mr. Robert Lovell," she instantly responded, gathering her kimono about her and making a little bow as if acknowledging an introduction, "allow me to introduce you to Miss Dorothy Cassilis of Chicago!"

## CHAPTER IX

### MR. LOVELL CHANGES MISS CASSILIS' MIND

MISS DOROTHY CASSILIS was so delighted with the effect of her brilliant *coup* that she laughed aloud, and the laugh completed the absolute discomfiture of Robert Lovell. He was a ready man ordinarily, but speech adequate to the situation utterly failed him. There had been a haunting suggestiveness about her face. He remembered now that he had seen pictures of her in various fashionable papers, and he cursed himself for a fool that he had not recognized her. As it was, he could only stare in astonishment. There was, however, a sufficient tribute to her quality, a sufficient meed of admiration in his bewildered regard, to flatter her pride and at last to make her take pity on him.

"You see," she began, demurely, "you have been mistaken in your numbering."

"Yes," answered Lovell, divining her meaning and at last finding his tongue. "You are the girl other people wanted me to marry."

"Number two, at your service," said Miss Cassilis.

Instantly she realized the possible meaning of her idle phrase. She colored deeply.

"Am I to infer that you are willing to carry out your part of the bargain?" he asked mischievously.

This was too much. The girl's indignation flamed.

"I suppose," she replied with cutting severity, "that because you have just saved my life—"

"Pardon me, I only helped you out of the car," he interrupted.

But she went on unheeding.

"—you have the right to say anything to me."

"I beg your pardon."

"You may well do so."

"I spoke idly, thoughtlessly. Let me tell you I only learned this little plan of our worthy parents accidentally."

"And so did I. No one could have been more indignant. It was for that reason alone that I left Chicago last week. I didn't want to meet you."

"And now that you have?"

"Without in any way derogating from obviously admirable qualities. Mr. Lovell, and with no reflection upon your availability as a husband, I am of the same opinion still," she said.

"Go on," he said mournfully. "I deserve it all."

"And further," she continued, "last night I telegraphed my father positively refusing to go on that absurd yachting cruise."

"Yet you were homeward bound on this train," he ventured mildly.

The young lady endeavored to stamp her little foot, but it was daintily slipped and the ground was muddy, so that the effort was unsuccessful although the purport was unmistakable.

"It is like you to say that. I presume it does not occur to you that a girl might care enough for her father and mother to wish to bid them good-by before they go wandering off to the South Seas."

"I had not thought of that," was the contrite reply. "You have beaten me in every way," he continued dejectedly. "I haven't a recourse save in your charity to the erring."

He looked so humble that Miss Cassilis again took pity on him.

"It wasn't your fault of course," she began, "—that absurd proposition, I mean."

"Indeed, no," was the prompt and unexpected answer, "and I assure you I was just as resentful of it as you were—" She flashed an indignant look at him; this was going a little too far, but he

continued equably: "—that is, until just now."

"Of course, I know you had to say that," she continued but with a rather pleased little laugh nevertheless. "Now that we have expressed ourselves as being thoroughly out of sympathy with the ideas of these fathers of ours, let's dismiss the subject."

"There is still the yachting cruise," he urged mildly.

"Exactly; you may go, and I will stay at home."

"I would gladly stay at home, myself," he said craftily, "and let you go. I have been in the South Seas several times. But my poor old father has set his heart on my going with him. Well, I shall be very sorry, but of course you can't be expected to have any particular interest in the welfare of my father. You might, however, go on the cruise. I won't pursue you with unwelcome attentions; and then no one can say that you were afraid to put yourself in the way of"—he hesitated—"shall I say, temptation?"

"You may say it if you wish but there really is none."

"Exactly, and therefore there is no real reason why you should not make the cruise. It will be delightful altogether, apart from me. The *Wanderer* is a beauty. She is really a six-thousand-ton steamer. It will be the voyage of a lifetime."

He suddenly smiled at her in the most inviting manner.

"I will think about it," said Miss Cassilis after a moment's hesitation.

"Meanwhile, in order to give you leisure to reflect, I will hunt up the conductor and find out what I can about the situation."

THE conductor of the train was a very anxious and busy man, but Robert Lovell's father was a director of the road and the conductor knew it.

"There is a farmhouse just around the cut yonder," he said. "I've telephoned division headquarters to send a special down to take the passengers on and clear the wreck. It will be late when we get into Chicago, of course, but we will get you there before night."



After a satisfactory interview with the farmer's wife, she appeared clad in the fashion of the year before last.

"I would like to do a little telephoning myself," said Lovell.

He sprinted up the track to the farmhouse. By a liberal expenditure of money he had the farmer hitch up a horse and buggy while he bought from the farmer's wife a dress, a coat and a hat, her best, for which he paid a price far beyond their value.

When he finished his telephoning he jumped into the buggy, drove back by the road until he came to the scene of the accident, where he found Miss Cassilis standing forlorn and disconsolate under the tree where he left her. He took her to the farmhouse whence, after a satisfactory interview with the farmer's wife, she appeared clad in the fashion of the year before last.

**FIVE** hours later the special drew into the headquarters of the division. The train stopped long enough to enable sundry clerks from the biggest dry-goods shop in the town to board it. These ladies, carrying big valises, had an interesting session with Miss Cassilis in the drawing-room of the car which Lovell had reserved for her. They had brought hats, shoes, underwear, dresses, in perfectly bewildering quantity and quality. It was a touch of imaginative forethought on the part of Lovell, who had arranged it all by telephone. Miss Cassilis bought what she wished, marveling how well the things fitted her and how well she looked; and when the train rolled into Chicago six hours late, the two who had sworn that nothing could ever force them into marrying were at least fast friends.

Daniel Cassilis met them at the train.

"Well, Dorothy," he began, "I am glad you changed your mind at the last minute and decided to go with us."

"Changed my mind?" exclaimed the girl in astonishment.

"Yes; I got your telegram an hour after the wreck."

"My telegram?" she said with a suspicious glance at her young companion.

"I sent it," said Lovell blandly. "I wired your father that you had decided to go."

The girl stared at him, but as she stared, in spite of herself she laughed.

"So your maid packed your trunks," continued her father. "She is on the train. I had your man bring your things down, too, Lovell. We held the Limited for you. All we have to do is get your trunks—the baggage car was not wrecked, I understand—and we will go straight to the train."

"How is Father?" asked Robert Lovell, secretly rejoiced that Miss Cassilis did not repudiate his assumption and rebuke him for his assurance.

"Not quite so well, I think. My physician, who has been in communication with Dr. Schenck, says we have got to get him aboard the yacht at once. Come, Dorothy, give me your trunk checks."

"I will punish you for that telegram," said the girl as her father turned away.

"So long as you go with us you may punish me all you wish."

"I've a great mind to decline even now."

"Are you afraid?"

"Of you?" asked the girl.

"Of yourself?"

"Of neither," was the prompt answer.

"Then go."

"I shall if only to prove to you and everybody that I am afraid of nothing. And besides, it will please Father and Mother so."

"Exactly," returned the young man with an innocent air.

"There is some important private business that I really must attend to in Chicago," said Lovell, greatly relieved, as Mr. Cassilis came back after having seen to the baggage. "I must have two or three hours."

"I don't believe the Santa Fe will hold the Limited another minute, even for me or your father."

"Well," said Lovell as they went toward the car, "if they wont do it you will have to go on without me. I will order a special and catch you at Kansas City. They ought to be able to make up the short time I will require without difficulty."

"You will see your father before you go, wont you?"

*Continued on page 1021 of this issue.*

"What is the matter? Why did you send me that telegram?"



## The Spirit of Night

*THAT was what they called the Princess Michèle in Paris, where she took them all by storm.*

By L. J. Beeston

Author of "Pauline March," etc.

"GENTLEMEN," said Prince Villarsky, tossing to the Turkey carpet a copy of *Le Petit Journal*, "there have been whispers lately regarding the disappearance of my wife. It is possible that you have created or echoed these unsubstantial surmisings, these curious conjectures. I do not blame you. She has vanished, certainly. Will she return? Listen to me: The Princess Michèle will not come back any more than the flowers which die, or the years which are ended."

Even the club waiter, in the act of picking up the fallen paper, started with surprise. In this smoking-room, this *salon-fumoir*, were seven members who

ILLUSTRATED BY  
HENRY A. THIEDE

heard the abrupt outburst. Every one had been reading, and all, with a single exception, turned startled eyes upon the speaker. The single exception did not look over the edge of his *Petit Parisien*. He was absorbed in it.

The Princess Michèle, who had first appeared in Parisian society three months back, had charmed her way along enchanted roads. Exclusive *salons* had welcomed her beauty; ice-barriers of convention had melted at her loveliness. Jealousy might hint that an excessive reserve masked no great depth of wit or intellectual perception, but jealousy did not count. The caress of her voice, her rare smile shadowed by some melan-

choly, were jewels of priceless esteem. That sonnet in the *Revue de deux Mondes* called "The Spirit of Night"—"L'Esprit de Nuit"—was undoubtedly addressed to her.

Suddenly she vanished.

"And if you ask me where she is," continued Prince Villarsky, her husband, in a calm and deliberate voice, "I reply—look for the snows which fell last winter; seek for those stars which endure but a second."

Theatrical! Also, the circumstances considered, not in the very best of taste. It jarred somewhat the nerves of the six listeners; the seventh was still absorbed, presumably. And the club waiter, in his smart green uniform with large gold buttons, lingered by one of the tiled tables, whisking off imaginary cigar ash.

What on earth was Prince Villarsky about to say? *Que diable!* So thought everyone there, uncomfortable, yet poignantly interested, leaning forward in the large, leather-covered chairs, watching the pallid face of the speaker, with its waxed mustaches, its cold eyes, its high, dome-like brow.



I found her at that farm eight years ago: an uncut, an unpolished jewel; a clod.

Their poignant interest overlooked a mis-timed rhetoric and the fact that the hour was late—for the Opera-house, quite close to this fashionable club in the Boulevard Capucines, had closed its doors an hour ago upon its patrons.

"It has been suggested to me," said Prince Villarsky, "that I owe some explanation to society of the absence of my wife, an explanation which courtesy first recommends, which will soon be requested by desirability, which must eventually be demanded by authority. I propose to speak—now.

"Life, it has been splendidly said, is a great adventure. I am going to give you a chapter on the joy of living—and loving. *Toujours l'amour!* It is the glory of a Frenchman; and of course I am a Frenchman despite the Russian title which I was obliged to assume when inheriting my estate in the Trans-baikal." He turned to the waiter: "Three cigars." The trained servant hesitated for a fraction of a second before darting off on the errand.

"You may possibly remember that the last time the Princess showed herself in public was that evening when they presented 'La Somnambule' at the Opera.

That evening I had an appointment to dine with the Countess de Monthéry. It seems that everybody who counts was there, at the opera. The Princess Michèle wore a gown of orange-colored silk, with her favorite Malmaison roses, her necklace of Orient pearls, of five hundred pearls which encircled her throat and fell, a lustrous shower, over her bosom; her diamond shoulder straps—of red diamonds; and gleaming in her hair, which was arranged in bandeaux, a star and crescent of rubies. I mention these details in no boastful spirit; they are necessary to my story.

"I was told that she seemed overshad-

owed by some sadness, and that the conclusion of the first act found her on the brink of tears. It was assumed that she was rendered melancholy by the sweet music of the mournful Bellini—his reiterated melodies which haunt us for hours after hearing them. Immediately upon the first fall of the curtain she left her box. She did not return to it. Regarding her subsequent movements, which were swift, dramatic, amazing, something of them I heard from her own lips; as for the rest, the nature of the scenes is perfectly familiar to me, and I see, even now, with a certain eye, a sure mental vision, precisely what took place.

"Without leaving the building she telephoned for her fastest car. Five minutes later, a cloak over her gown and her thickest furs over her cloak, she had left the river northward. Look for her an hour later: she is already far south; the cry of the powerful engine disturbs only sleeping cattle, and the telegraph posts slip up out of the dark and fling backwards, unceasing, monotonous, the wind gurgling in their insulators."

THE narrator paused to take one of the three cigars which the waiter offered to him in a wine-glass. The *garçon* glided away, but did not leave the *fumoir*. Doubtless a scene like this did not enliven his usual experience.

"We pass over an interval of many hours," went on Villarsky, gripping his cigar between his teeth, screwing his shoulders into the padded leather. "We look for the Princess Michèle again. She has completed a long journey upon which an overpowering impulse started her with such great abruptness. A new day declines. An interval of rest she spent at an auberge. And now she is in her car again, which is drawn up under a bank. She is waiting for twilight to deepen. The shadows grow; the dew falls; and from the white marjoram and tufts of sweet southernwood upon the bank rises a delicate fragrance. She inhales this perfume as if it was a familiar one, and she looks round with a strange, an inexpressible gaze upon the deserted fields, the fields of rye, of colza, of barley, and upon a large pool over which two willow trees hang their festoons of

green, slender leaves in a beautiful shower of foliage.

"It is now almost dark. The Princess leaves her car. She says to the chauffeur: 'Wait for me.'"

"Where is she? For reasons which will soon be apparent to you, gentlemen, I cannot give exact information. I will say generally that she is in the Périgord country, in the country of the Upper Périgord. She must know this part of it well enough, for she climbs an upland with no hesitation, with a quick and certain step. The reapers have departed and taken their songs with them. The last chirp of a grasshopper has been received and absorbed by the evening quiet, graciously accepted.

"When she reaches the ridge of the upland she perceives, in the distance, reddened lights that gleam behind window panes. A hamlet is down there, and the sight of it sends her right hand to her bosom as if in pain. Behind the hamlet is a forest, so black and forbidding that one would think night had walked out of it. Suddenly a wild shout comes from its recesses; it is the cry of the eagle owl. The harsh scream of the oriole replies, and the wrangle of the bullfrogs booms from a marsh.

"The Princess Michèle follows a stony path which leads to a farmhouse at an extremity of the hamlet. On one side of this farm is a livid pool, on the other a wall that is covered with briony and the yellow blooms of celandine. She passes a shed from which the shafts of a cart protrude and against which is piled an immense heap of dung. She glides through a copse of trees, of apple trees which stand amongst tall dandelions. For a moment she pauses, breathing sharply. Suspicious hens clutter uneasily, and she goes forward boldly, lifts the latch of the farmhouse door. Her journey is over.

"She is in a kitchen which is also a living-room. A wood fire burns in a wide hearth, and over the fire is an iron pot suspended by a chain. The floor is of red bricks, and from the rafters, grimed with smoke of thousands of fires, hang down long filaments of webs which move spectral-fashion, uneasy in the draught. Pieces of bacon hang there also, and



long strings of onions. A huge wooden clock is fastened to one of the walls, and each *tic-tac* of the ponderous pendulum kills a second of time.

"On a table a lamp, filled with a crude colza oil, burns with a smoky flare.

"A man sits by this table putting down figures in a greasy account book, and the labor of it distorts his face into a hundred creases. He is broad-shouldered, deep-chested, has hair tinged with gray; and his blue blouse, open at the neck, shows the muscles of his bull-throat. He looks up quickly as the Princess enters. A questioning frown furrows his forehead. It fades abruptly. In his blue eyes a light of bewilderment flashes. He springs to his feet. The blood rushes from his face. He clenches and unclenches his huge fists, red and coarse from their work in the fields. He opens his mouth to say something, but can only make a meaningless exclamation. He trembles all over, catches at the table for support. A cold dew bursts upon his forehead. What strangling emotion so convulses him? He has become suddenly afraid; a mortal fear almost makes his heart stop. Who is this woman?

"She is his wife, messieurs."

EVERY listener betrayed amazement by a violent start. Only the man behind the *Petit Parisien* moved not a muscle. Perhaps he was asleep. And the waiter, hanging about curiously, shrugged his shoulders, and a smile lifted his tiny mustache.

"His wife, *mes amis*," continued Prince Villarsky, still biting on his cigar, gazing through the blue smoke with dreamy eyes. "That surprises you? It is true. It is also a confession. The love we have for each other is no justification, but it is something, all the same. I found her at that farm eight years ago: an un-cut, an unpolished jewel of the purest water. Yes, I took her away. She was then wearing a hideous white coif, a canvas skirt, woolen stockings. A peasant girl of Périgord, a clod! You will agree that I have transformed her. I think that one of her ancestors must have been noble. It is an ascension to type. And now she returns to the farm: a lady, you will admit. For five years

I sent her to the best schools. Her hands are delicate as porcelain, as beautiful as fragile porcelain. Her cheeks wear the rose's flush; her gaze is straight, proud: her carriage is that of a—*a* princess. She pushes aside, with a mechanical gesture, her heavy sables. Her bosom shows white as a lily, and her jewels break into flame, into points of multi-colored fire.

"She says, in a low voice which is not perfectly under control, 'I heard that Anna, our child, is very ill.'

"The man's pallor deepens. His limbs twitch as if an ague from his fields, a death-mist from the marshes, had entered his bones. How frightened he is! He is twenty years older than his wife; with a grasp of his sinewy fingers he could crush out her life. What, then, unnerves him in this fashion? He is afraid—for his child. When his wife went away he sent after her a bitter curse or two, and forgot her. But the child which she left became his idol, the apple of his eye, his soul's jewel; and his one fear was that he might lose it also, by some means, some cruel stroke of fate.

"And now, as you see, the mother comes back, with that question upon her lips. Has she come for her child whom she never has been able to forget, in her heart to abandon, to cease loving? The man fears it. He will not part! All the fiends in the pit shall not drag his darling from him! But he is afraid of his transformed wife; her beauty, her grace, her command, daunt him.

"He growls in a voice which has a whimper and a snarl: 'Go away! You are not wanted here. Go away!'

"He would rather have had a panther slink through his doorway than this beautiful creature.

"Michèle answers in a soothing voice, in a tone which one uses to a scared child: 'I have not come to do you any harm. Will you let me see my little girl?'

"He pants: 'No—no—no!'

"I know I wronged you deeply, Anton. I want to do anything in my power to help. And so much is in my power. Do tell me—is Anna very, very ill?'

"He gurgles: 'How do you know she is ill?'

"I must not answer that question."

"What have you come back for?"

"To see my baby girl. I have suffered, wanting her. She is part of my heart, and I only realized it when I lost her. Do let me do something, Anton. I will send the very best doctors from Paris."

"By Heaven, you shall not!" shouts Anton. "I will not be interfered with here! You understand that?"

"Oh, of course I do," answers Michèle, very gently. "She is yours— heaven forgive me. I only want to know if she is very ill."

"Well, no," Anton replies, after a pause, watching Michèle with a searching, stealthy gaze as if he feared some treachery. "She has been ill, but she is now out of danger."

"You swear to me that that is true?"

"Yes, I am not lying. And now, be off!"

"Let me see her, Anton: just one look!" she pleads.

"He makes a furious gesture of refusal."

"She draws near him, pushing her furs back so that her shoulders gleam like a white dawn. Her calm eyes meet and beat his down. She puts her gloved fingers on his right arm. She smiles in her tender, her caressing way."

"Just one look, Anton—just one," she beseeches.

"For a minute he is altogether confused so that his senses reel. The transformation almost makes him think that he is dreaming. *This* the farm girl whom he had married in the village church? This cultured, graceful beauty his—his wife! A subtle perfume emanates from her skin; a wisp of her hair touches his face. For a fraction of a second he meditates a mad idea of flinging his huge arms around this radiant presence; and she, perhaps divining it, draws back hastily."

"Go!" commands Anton; and he flings open the door.

"This time Michèle obeys. The door closes with a crash behind her. And Anton puts up the bar as if he were shutting a wild beast from his hearth."

"Michèle glides away quickly. It is her turn to tremble. A sob makes her beautiful throat quiver. She ascends

swiftly to the ridge of the upland, where she stops, fighting for breath.

"The tranquil night composes her. She perceives the gray tower of the village church. It was the curé of this church who supplied her with news of Anton and of Anna. He is a good man, and his idea is to win her back to that farm. Her leaving it he terms a deadly sin. Perhaps he is right. Yet love, my profound affection, won her, and love is its own excuse for worse excesses. 'Come back,' the curé often writes. 'Return, my daughter, as you went. Not with a name and rank which does not belong to you, but empty-handed, in the spirit of sorrow, of repentance, prostrate before God; and I promise you that I have enough influence with Anton to make him receive you and yield you your place again.'

"Can she do it? No, for she loves me. Is her sin so very great? She feels that it is; but then her horizon has been so enlarged, her experience of life so widened, and she, who lived in a mud-hole, reigns in salons. What, go back just as she left, in that hideous coif, that coarse dress, those wooden sabots, to that stagnant existence! To lose her beauty and her youth there! No—no! Only—there is her child which 'in her heart she has not abandoned.'

"She looks round upon the slumbering fields which are suspiring a pale breath that blurs the stars and reddens the horned moon. And slowly in her bosom rise, also, instincts; through her veins, in which courses the peasant blood which she has inherited from generations and generations of toilers of the fields, now awake ancient longings which are almost dreams: primeval impulses. The perfume of wet earth dilates her nostrils—the odor of the wheat, the smell of hay. She hears again the rain on the land, the trickle of the rills, the majestic voices of oxen, songs of birds, the cry of the trees, the high call of the free winds, the grinding of wains coming home, in the sunset, to where the firelight reddens the cottage window. She sees the blossoming apple trees holding out their arms covered with beauty, the translucent pools in the hollows; the chalice-cups of the flowers, the dew on the

grass, moss round the boles of oaks, the procession of the stars, the ascent of the changing moon: all those wonders which chide so divinely, which mock so sweetly the race and roar of our fevered life in this Paris.

"And then? Why, then she returns to her house in the Avenue de l'Opera, returns as swiftly as she started upon that escapade. Anton Grégoire's wife is the Princess Michèle again; instead of a farmstead, a marble palace. She asks for me, is told that I am out and handed a note which I have left for her. She takes this note into her boudoir, opens it, and reads as follows:

*Ma chérie:*

Prepare yourself for this letter, which will, I fear, hurt you deeply. We have spent some golden years together, and I thank you passionately. How it will grieve you to know that they must now end, that they are finished. You will call me faithless, cruel, monstrous; but the relations between us must now cease, broken by a more conventional, if not a more profound claim upon my affections. I will not add to your pain by writing long and useless protestations, extenuations of my decision. Neither did I feel able to see you in a final parting which could have done us little good. I will see that you are not left penniless. I ask you to forget me, and I bow to your reproaches.

"This letter is mine. It descends on that wrecked heart like a fireball which falls suddenly down the sky and explodes in ruin."

THE narrator took number two of his three cigars out of the glass. With deliberation he sliced off the tip of one end, and he fixed his gaze steadily upon the man behind the paper, the man who was possibly asleep. But he could not see this man's face, only the back page of his *Petit Parisien*, and the big black letters of an advertisement, "*Ne Coute Plus . . . Rien.*"

The *garçon* had slipped behind a granite-faced pillar. He was decidedly curious to hear the end of this story, and his eyes gleamed with extraordinary interest.

The six other listeners did not move

except occasionally to look at one another. They were stupefied. A club-room chosen for the recital of so private a matter? The speaker was mad—*fou!*

At that moment a supper party from the Café de la Paix went by singing the song of Compardin's which begins, "*La vie est bref; aimons toujours . . .*"

Prince Villarsky went on, with an abrupt change of tense:

"Twenty minutes after receiving that letter, and while Michèle was still sitting in her chair feeling her heart, which was almost cold and dead, flutter in her bosom, a visitor was announced. His card bore the inscription—'Arnaud Dupontel;' and in a corner the words—'*Service de Sûreté.*' Momentarily startled out of her despair by the coming of a police officer, Michèle ordered him to be admitted.

"I understand that Arnaud Dupontel is a rising man in our bureau of secret police. He began:

"I have been charged with a mission of some delicacy, Princess, and not without romance. I regret to inform you that your husband Prince Villarsky is, contrary to his will and knowledge, in a position of some peril. I want you to be quite frank with me, as I will be with you, for only through your assistance can we help him. During the last twenty-four hours I have tried in vain to get in touch with him. Do you know what has become of him? Now that letter in your hand—if you prefer to keep it secret—?"

"The hot blood poured over Michèle's face. To show the letter was to reveal the secret of her life with me. She demurred: 'Tell me more.'

"As you please," said Dupontel, shrugging. 'Listen to me. It is possible that you will never see the Prince again. There is a woman in the case. We are searching, not for your husband, but for this woman. It is a matter of sure knowledge that he was seen with her about thirty hours ago, in the Avenue des Champs Elysées.'

"Her name?" asked Michèle with the quickness of a jealous woman.

"Her latest: the Countess de Monthery."

"Her latest?"

"She has many. No more dangerous criminal—and scarcely a more charming one,—has preyed upon society in every capital in Europe."

"The Countess de Monthery?" cried Michèle. 'I have met her. She arrived in Paris barely a week ago.' Then, as she saw hope gleam, she panted: 'And the Prince does not know that she is—what you say?'

"Of course not," answered Dupontel. 'Be assured of that. Yet if she has marked him down as her quarry .... Come, you will show me that letter?'

together and save him by finding his companion. Her arrest will cure him of this unfortunate infatuation, you will admit. You perceive now why I am so anxious to locate Prince Villarsky. And in return for your confidence I will impart one.

"Fourteen years ago a series of astonishing bank robberies occurred in French provincial towns and engaged the utmost attention of a completely baffled police. I need not enter into details; suffice it for me to say that three Frenchmen finally came under observa-

"To show the letter was to reveal her secret. She demurred: 'Tell me more.'"



"Michèle shook her head. 'I cannot,' she murmured.

"Then at least tell me if it suggests a woman's hand concerned in this prolonged absence of Prince Villarsky," insisted Dupontel.

"Michèle, with those written words, 'A more profound claim upon my affections,' branded upon her memory, could only reply, 'Indeed, I fear it.'

"Excuse me—it is possible that Prince Villarsky has left you?" questioned Dupontel.

Michèle bowed her head.

"Ah, how sorry I am," sympathized the officer. "Thank you for that information. It will, I think, serve. We will act

tion. Their names were Livet, d'Apréval, and La Hire. Suddenly they disappeared, after robbing the Three Departments Bank at Havre, of a hundred thousand francs.

"When other means failed, a desperate police offered a pardon to any one of those three who would betray his confederates. La Hire fell to the temptation, for it turned out that discovery was imminent. The two others received heavy sentences. The affair gripped the attention of the public chiefly because the so-called man, Louis d'Apréval, turned out to be a woman—a girl. It also transpired that when the trio heard of the offer of pardon they met in one of their retreats

—a house in the Rue Bellechasse, and exchanged a vow that, in the event of one turning traitor, the others would not rest until they had killed him.

"Fortunately for La Hire, he died shortly before the release of his companions. I say fortunately, for although the girl might have let him go, the man Jules Livet would assuredly have got a knife into him, for hate and vengeance were incarnate in that ferocious spirit, naturally a killer despite his culture and education, and transformed into a devil by long years of imprisonment. So much for La Hire.

"As for Livet, since his freedom he has retired somewhere into obscurity. Not so the girl, once known as d'Aprial. In her long exile she matured, developed, became beautiful just as a rare flower, an orchid, grows in loveliness in the heart of a foul swamp. Three years ago she was let loose upon society, and we lost sight of her. Death has closed La Hire's book; Livet has, presumably, turned down his black chapters; but the woman, under many aliases, continues to add to her stories of fraud, the last of which she committed in Buda. Help me, if you get the chance, to find her—under the name of the Countess de Monthéry.

"And now," added Dupontel, rising and taking his hat and gloves, "if you should hear again from Prince Villarsky, 'phone me at No. 37 Rue Rochecouard."

"He went. And two hours later Michèle received a telegram which ran:

Be on the balcony at the Ambassadeurs' café at nine o'clock.



"For two weeks, since that little

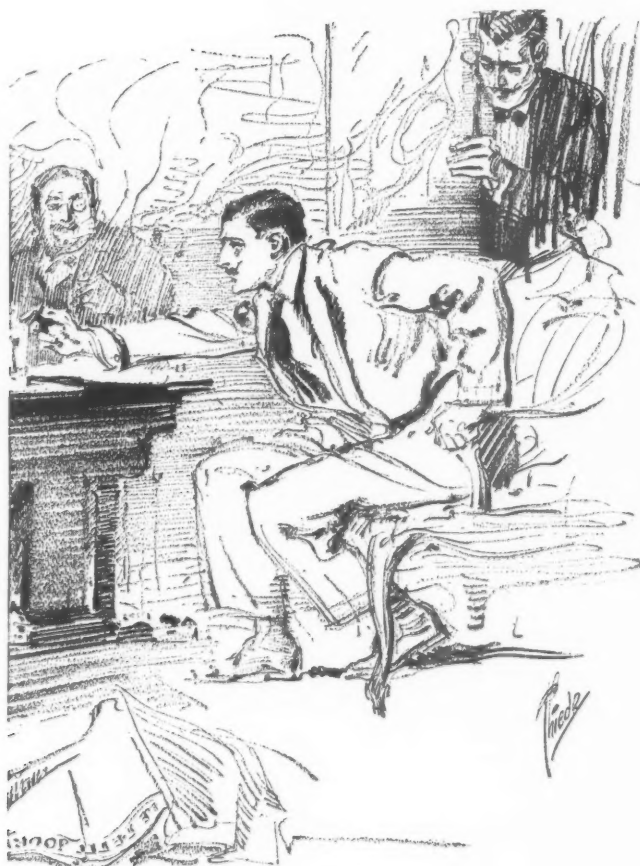
"The message bore no name."

HIS throat having suddenly become husky, the narrator paused. He looked round and saw the waiter's thin face half-concealed by the column.

"A glass of cold water," he ordered.

He sipped a little of it, watching, over the rim of the glass, the man behind the newspaper, who had not changed his position. Then he reached out for his third cigar. He placed the leaf to his nostrils, and inhaled, with an apparent and deliberate enjoyment, the first whiff of blue smoke.

"My story moves to an end, mes-



dinner, I have been avoiding the police."

sieurs," he went on. "Who sent that telegram to Michèle? I did. She guessed, or rather she hoped as much; and at nine o'clock, as I was seated at a table on the balcony of the big café chantant, and on the stage at the further end, amongst the artificial flowers, the artistes were singing their songs, she—my Michèle appeared. She had come alone, and not wishing to be recognized, therefore, was wearing a simple black cloak and had her face hidden by a thick veil. As soon as she was seated she said in a tense, in a shaking voice:

"What is the matter? Why did you send me that telegram? I know there is

some mystery, some terrible secret. You would not abandon me — you! *Mon Dieu*, what is going on?"

"I answered, soothingly, 'We will, if you please, take the matter quite calmly. First, I will order some dinner.'

"She tried to eat, but her agitation would not be repressed. Knife and fork fell from her little hands. She pleaded, with a wild look around, 'For God's sake, do not keep me in this suspense.'

"At that moment a cello and a clarinet struck up a slow, mournful barcarolle. I leaned across the table towards Michèle. 'I did wrong to send for you,' I began. 'But I had to see you once more, just once again. I love you. We have done wrong together, you and I; but I have loved you truly. Shall I call this my shame

or my glory? I am not unfaithful to you. I am incapable of that crime. I had my reasons for leaving you, but you shall know them. Tell me, where have you been since that evening at the opera?"

"With no hesitation she informed me of her visit; only at times I had to check her inclination to hurry, to blur over details. It seemed to me then that that adventure of hers was not without dramatic contrasts. You have heard of it; I have related it to you to the best of my ability, and without drawing, I believe, in the least upon my imagination. From that she passed to her return to our house



in the Avenue de l'Opera, to her finding of my letter, to the coming of Arnaud Dupontel, to his extraordinary revelation. I must confess that that was extremely interesting.

"She stopped. I waited for her to ask questions, to make comments, but she maintained silence. In her white throat a pulse was beating quickly.

"I said to her: 'Do you believe this story?'

"She questioned: 'Is it true?'

"'With the exception of one detail,' I answered. 'Dupontel declares that La Hire is dead, and he knows perfectly well that he is living. I am La Hire.'

"I saw her lips move, though no sound came from them. She stiffened in her chair. A girl on the stage suddenly began to sing, in a piercing soprano voice, one of those doubtful songs which one at times hears at the Ambassadeurs.

"I continued: 'That is the only name to which I have any right. It is as sure as that the man Livet is alive and that he will kill me, as certain as that I have fooled the police ever since they were imbeciles enough to let me go. Swindler or adventurer—call me as you will, I have made a dozen fortunes, and lost as many. In the restless years of roaming, of perpetual change, which we have spent together, the truth never dawned upon you. And it should not now—only that I have realized the end of my long, long tether. Arrest? I laugh at the word; but I do not laugh at the name of Jules Livet, that man-killer.

"'Why do I make my confession to you? Because I know perfectly well that Livet will get me, and that the truth will come out. So I want you to go away, Michèle, to disappear eternally; otherwise, suspicion will fasten upon you, and you may suffer for my sins. You know where to go. You were there but a few hours back. Vanish into that obscurity from which I took you. It is your sole refuge from a world which will crush you, else.

"'I am sorry, Michèle, that I brought you to Paris. Yet it was just a luckless chance which sent the Countess here, also. She recognized me. *She* kill me? Scarcely, because she loved me in those far-ago days before I betrayed her and

Livet, and she loves me still, with a tigress' affection. Ah, how jealous she was of you! To win me, to get me entirely to herself, she threatened to put Livet on my track. I yielded to her; I abandoned you in the way you know. Then I was pierced through with anguish. What would you think of me? And I love you! At the last moment I defied the Countess. She was furious. I have not the least doubt what she will do; and I cannot blame her. Livet will get a knife or pistol ball into me before I see a dozen sun-risings.

"'Go back to Anton, to Anna, in poverty, humility. You have the Curé's word. You must think that you have dreamed what has been, this splendor. I am false in everything but my love for you. That is my only worth.

"'I shall not be arrested. I shall beat Dupontel, who has at last, apparently, discovered La Hire in the Prince Villarsky. No doubt he saw me dining with the Countess; but although he was sure of her identity he was, even then, doubtful of mine. Afterwards he had no doubt. My letter to you he had probably opened before you got it. He will try to use you as a decoy—that is, if he has not already done so.'

"Michèle answered me, in a dull, a despairing, a dead voice: 'He has. I did not tell you because—because—*mon Dieu!* I felt that all was not right. He asked me to let him know instantly should you write to me. Then came your message. I was to meet you here at nine o'clock.'

"'Ah, and he knows that?' I asked quietly.

"She answered, in that same tone of wrecked happiness, 'As I said, I feared that something was wrong, and—and I put the hour on: I told him ten o'clock.'

"'Thank you for that,' I responded. 'I have, therefore, precisely five minutes.'

"She panted: 'Go—for pity's sake!'

"'When I have settled the bill.'

"I beckoned the waiter. The matter occupied two minutes.

"'Quick,' said Michèle.

"I lighted a cigarette. Composure in such moments, gentlemen, has made me—what I am.



"'Adieu, my beloved,' I murmured, reaching out for her hand to kiss in eternal parting. She half extended it, then drew it back. A sob left her lips; her arms fell; she was on the brink of fainting.

"And I walked out slowly from the café chantant as the piercing soprano finished her vulgar song and the people broke into a subdued applause. I did not look back, but I knew her eyes followed me.

"I THINK that is all my story, which you perceive is a confession. You ask, silently, why I make it in this public fashion, in this club whose membership-roll I was supposed to honor, to adorn. I have two answers to that question. The first is that I wanted to clear Michèle, in the most open and convincing way, of the smallest suspicion of being considered as my confederate in any crime save that of leaving her world for mine. *N'importe*, the golden apples have turned to ashes in her mouth. I have explained also her disappearance, as I promised. That radiant star has fallen. My princess trudges the fields, the ruts—bends all day over the bare, moist lands, scatters the seeds, pulls up the grown tubers, plods wearily home in the twilight. And my Adventure ends, justly

ends, though it has been sweet enough, believe me.

"Then as to my second reason. For two weeks, since that little dinner at the Ambassadeurs', I have been avoiding the police, which was not so difficult, and eluding Jules Livet, which was desperately hard. Choosing the unexpected, I doubled and came here for a final hour; and I abruptly resolved to speak my mind, seeing no other opportunity either in the near or distant future—because, my friends, it happens that that waiter there, behind the pillar, is Arnaud Dupontel, very properly engaged in noting my evidence against myself, and to whom I surrender willingly, eagerly—because that gentleman who has been hiding his face behind *Le Petit Parisien* is most assuredly none other than Jules Livet!"

Every member leaped to his feet. Livet was up first. A pistol gleamed in his hand, and it spat fire with a splitting report, but not before Dupontel with a well-aimed blow had sent the weapon circling to the carved ceiling. In the same moment he whipped round and his clutching fingers came down upon the narrator's shoulder: "I arrest you!"

"Charmed!" mocked La Hire.

And he tossed his third cigar into the open fireplace.

## "The Conspiracy at the CHÂTEAU"

It all happens right here and now in humdrum (?) America—this duel with sabers in the great hall of a wilderness mansion, this glamorous love-affair between a daughter of feudal France and a son of democratic America. You will find the whole remarkable episode vividly described in—

EDWIN BALMER'S BEST STORY

IN THE APRIL RED BOOK MAGAZINE  
ON SALE AT ALL NEWS-STANDS MARCH 23RD.

# "Wanted: A Clever, Discreet Young Man"

*THE story of the young man who answered the "ad" and of the results of a terrifying sneeze.*

By Ida M. Evans

Author of "Virginia," "Mudpuddles," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

**I**F YOU are one of the gray-eyed, red-blooded, alert-brained young men whom America and twentieth-century novelists jointly have created as examples of what young men ought to be, you are not likely to shout with joy over selling notions in a department-store basement. Such employment is poor soil whereon to raise the crop of limousines, footmen, onyx bathtubs, diamond-and-Paris-gowned wife and Wall Street affiliations, that every one of such young men plans to harvest somewhere between grammar school and his six-by-two last bedroom.

But—

If you have rubbed shoulders in bread lines with several hundred other men, many of whom are as ambitious and brainy as yourself; or if you have slunk home night after night with restlessly lowered eyelids, so as not to see the disappointed home-eyes at your muttered "No, I didn't get a job;" or if you ever have had to acquire the hateful habit of assuming hastily the happy, polite smile which all Booklets of Success advise young men seeking employment to wear—a smile which sits as incongruously on your gaunt face as a pink chiffon scarf on a fence post—then, a narrow notions counter looms before you as a solace, a meal-ticket, the wall which divides heaven from hell.

There were times when the ten-fifty, cotton-roughed-like-wool blue serge el-

bows of Mat Brader, recalling the past, leaned as thankfully on that notions counter as chickens at dark on their own roost. Twelve per! It is a high, sweet financial note when sung surely and regularly after long bread-line and park-bench hoarseness.

But there were other times when Mat kicked at the counter as thanklessly as a rabbit nibbles its protective palings—times when his nostrils, sniffing the tailored tweed and the authority of other men, twitched—as a filly, haltered away from the track, twitches at the starting word.

At one of these kicking, twitching times, his eyes, hungering down the "Business Chances" column in his newspaper like a lost pup looking for the home alley, found:

Wanted—A clever, discreet young man who wishes to add materially to present income. Employee of large mercantile house preferred.

Crooked?

Certainly. Else why the equivocal *discreet*?

**T**HERE was a time in the history of English when *discreet* was unequivocal and as respectable as a mourning bonnet. But mourning bonnets followed the suttie out of style. And *discreet* slid from its respectable place, and became a verbal adventurer, as much an eyesore as the flashy crêpe

veil flaunted by a bleached, rouged lady of adventure.

Now Mat knew enough to come indoors when hailstones were pelting. He was not one of the trusting souls who order chicken croquettes in strange restaurants. Moreover, by instinct and training, he was honest. But he cocked the newspaper between a dun derby that had seen better days and some draggly purple pseudo-aigrets that had seen worse, so that the column got full benefit from the Lincoln Avenue car's economically faint overhead bulbs, and re-read that "discreet" ad.

For the re-reading and the place of reading, there was a reason.

I r m a  
Noland  
was the  
reason  
f o r



the re-reading—

besides the lesser reasons of ambition and cotton blue serge. Sometimes

when Mat got to thinking of Irma, he kicked the notions counter so hard the blacking was scuffed from his shoes. Irma was a stenographer. She had dark blue eyes that could be quizical as *Foxy Grandpa's*, as dreamy as a young politician's hope of the White House, and as practical as that same politician's office apportionments when he is old and wearily occupying that House.

Her acquaintance with Mat began when she stopped at his counter one day to buy white thread. One night, two months later, while the moon white-washed Wilson Beach, and

Lake Michigan swished up rhythmic melody to chord with the summer breeze, her eyes dusked into dreamy coals and she told Mat that she loved him, had loved him from that first thread purchase, and would love him forever and ever, even on twelve per. Amen.

A year later, in a hot, smelly café that held all the ten- and fifteen-cent luncheoners one café can hold without bursting its windows and spilling beans en casserole and chocolate eclairs out on the pavement, her eyes were practical as she reminded him that she was twenty-



Sometimes when Mat got to thinking of Irma, he kicked the notions counter.

five years old, and since her trousseau needn't, wouldn't and couldn't be extensive, she was willing to buy the thread for it any time he asked.

Mat savagely chewed a ham sandwich. "God knows I wish I could ask you. But—twelve dollars!" he said fiercely.

Dreaminess and practicality merged in Irma's blue eyes, forming an expression of quizzical tenderness. "I'm getting ten,"—crumbling the oily wall of a condensed-milk-and-cornstarch cream puff. "That makes twenty-two."

"You have your mother to support," said Mat. "I have mine. And my sister Helen with a tubercular hip. You might as well sign a life contract to run the mangle in a non-union laundry."

"But I wouldn't enjoy running a mangle," objected Irma.

Mat did not say "Woman, do not tempt me." He was a modern young man. He growled: "Cheese it. I got all the burden I can stand."

"I wouldn't be a burden,"—softly.

Mat cut off further parley by reaching for the soiled navy-blue checks and grunting: "Come on: it's late and I've got to get back to the store."

This was the reason for the re-reading. And the reason he read want ads, in the street car, and then, before he got off, carefully refolded the paper with the news pages outermost, was his mother, a frail, spiritless woman who regarded the notions counter as a God-lowered raft in poverty's black sea. If Mat didn't sit still and hold tight, they might be drowned!

OF the first nine years of his life, Mat remembered chiefly his inevitable white buckskin shoes, a pony cart, a clean-faced maid and Mr. Felkins, an old-young man with dark brown hair that was short-cropped and napped his narrow head silkily, like sealskin. And Mr. Felkins he remembered chiefly for a remarkable and oft-recurring sneeze, the like of which, Mat was sure, was never heard before on land or sea. It began with a rumble, like a bass viol, swelled to the shrillness of a laundry whistle; then came a series of tenor chortles, and finally it died away with the melancholy sweetness of the last

notes of the Berceuse from "Jocelyn."

Whenever Mr. Felkins appeared, Mat and Helen (who even then had begun to complain babyishly of an aching hip) hurried in from their play, in the hope of enjoying that wonderful conglomeration of sound. And they enjoyed it often. Felkins nearly always had a cold.

Felkins had charge of their dead father's estate. One day he unexpectedly left the small Ohio town. Mrs. Brader waited unlightened for ten days. Then she learned that he had cared for the estate as a spider cares for a fly. Debt gulped the house, the pony cart, almost Mat and Helen's white buckskin shoes.

Mrs. Brader had no near relatives. Mat still remembered, aching, the dazed, stupid look with which she hunted work. She sold books from door to door, clerked, washed, sewed by the day, and finally they drifted to Chicago, where Helen could be taken to a clinic. There Mrs. Brader kept working, at candy, shoe, box factories, all those places where quantity, not quality, of workers is desired.

The brand of incompetency is harder than Cain's to bear. Sometimes it is more than a brand; it is a birthright. All nature's legality is lacking in technicalities with which to evade birthrights. Mary Brader trailed work as fiercely as an old bear trails mutton for its cubs, but somehow she could not learn the ways or skill of the working clans, though starvation was her lashing teacher.

So it was not to be wondered that, when Mat had landed on the solid, if narrow, notions counter, she should hold it rank in gratitude for him to kick it. Worse—sacrilege!

To avoid argument, Mat read "Business Chances" in the street car. Now he scowled absently as his neighbor's hat shifted, shadowing the last line, and he recoiled the paper to re-read:

Need not interfere with present work.  
Call at Room 542 Jawnaham Building.

"HELLO, Mat! Thought I saw your lean jaw, so I wriggled through the mob on the back platform—and, be-

lieve me, it was like a gopher wriggling through a floor crack. How's everybody?"

Mat grinned greeting at a nattily shabby young man, Clarence Holcomb, who once had graced the notions counter for two and two-sevenths days, till a floorman had remarked that Clarence's disposition needed wider stamping ground.

"Fair," said Mat. "How's yourself—and Lenora?"

"Both squally,"—airily. "We're speaking to each other to-day, but likely we wont to-morrow. Come home with me for supper."—hospitably. "I'll tell you about a chance I've got to make a lot of money, if I can get a chance to utilize the chance—"

But Mat had once supped with the Holcombs when they were not speaking to each other, and another time when they chose to speak their entire unkind opinion of each other. Neither time had been pleasant. So he declined. Sight of Mr. or Mrs. Holcomb always strengthen Mat's resolve not to marry Irma and follow in their squabbling footsteps. He was grimly aware that poverty usually breeds squabbling, as filth breeds flies.

Thinking of them, Mat forgot to refold the paper and unwarily laid it on the dining table with "Business Chances" outside. Two minutes later, his mother's eyes lingered on it, as a teller's thumb lingers on a too-thin greenback. "You're not laid off!" she cried in panic.

"No—no!" Mat spoke impatiently and smiled tolerantly.

The evening was depressive. After months of avoidance of the topic, his mother chose to discuss how different their lives would have been had James Felkins been differently principled. "You could have gone to law school, Matty. When you were six months old, a phrenologist told your father to make a lawyer out of you—"

"Dead wood, Mother,"—restively. Mat did not enjoy obsequies.

"And Helen could have been operated on in time to save her—her hip!"

"Some day I hope I meet our good friend Mr. Felkins!" said Mat meaningly.

IT was not a coincidence that the next morning a prosperous old lady in gray silk should say to a friend, apropos of a four-minute wait for tan twist, "Of course he's stupid! If he weren't, he'd be doing other work!" Old ladies and young, prosperous and otherwise, often complained thus.

But at noon Mat cut out lunch and went around to the Jawnahan Building, muttering: "By George, I'll get *other* work!"

It was a big, busy building. An elevator shot him up to the fifth floor, where several corridors, lined with lettered, frosted glass doors, offered to sell him anything from second-hand clothes to cemetery stock. Door 542 read:

SMITH, GRAWN & Co.  
Realty, Stocks & Bonds.

Mat's lip curled—"I thought so!"—as he entered. Mr. Smith proved to be a thin, middle-aged gentleman with sleek dark brown hair, a voice as suave as honey and a hand-clasp as energizing as Billy Sunday's. The too suave voice and the too cordial hand convinced Mat that *discreet* had been inserted with thought. Mr. Grawn proved to be a bald, fleshy gentleman with a large, bellicose nose. He was dictating to a pert, stylish stenographer, and he continued to dictate while he scowled inquisitively at Mat.

Now Matthew Brader had intended to proffer his services—provided after inspection, he decided to proffer them at all!—in the sad, proud way that a prince might marry a homely princess whom he does not love but will nobly embrace for his country's good. Mr. Smith's suavity would have intensified such intention. Mr. Grawn's scowl upset him.

"You advertised—" he began awkwardly.

"Ah, yes," said Mr. Smith. "What experience have you had in our line?"

Not having had any, Mat had not intended to claim any. He had planned to say brusquely, in effect, if not in actual words, "See here! I'm hard up! I'm darn near ready for burglary. I've got scruples, and I know you're a set of scamps. But I've got to have money.

So trot out your proposition. If it isn't too rotten, I'll look it over!"

What he said meekly was: "None, sir, I must confess. But I'd like to show what I can do."

Mr. Grawn shrugged his shoulders. "I'm afraid a degree of experience is essential," said Mr. Smith deprecatingly. He looked at Mat kindly, though.

"Your ad. said no experience was necessary," protested Mat.

"True," admitted Smith. "But—"

"Say! What about this batch of D. & K. bonds?" shouted Grawn. "Did you let those Petersons have 'em? I tell you,"—fiercely,— "I won't deal with that bunch! They're as unreliable as a punctured tomato can—"

"Yes—yes, in a moment. Mr. Grawn." There was impatience in Mr. Smith's voice. "Now,"—amiably—  
"Mr.—"

"Brader."

"Mr. Brader, I know we

raspberries. Mat's voice was sullen as he told the place and nature of his employment.

"And you think your circle of acquaintances is such that you could be of use to us?" asked Mr. Smith smilingly.

"Guess not," said Mat shortly, and rose to go.

Smith inspected him. "You look as though you ought to be doing something bigger than selling lin-



"Please marry me, Mat!" And when she said again, "Please!" he said hotly: "I won't!"

advertised that experience was not exactly necessary."—pleasantly. "That meant—if the applicant was of extraordinary personality and ability. You are employed?"

It is one thing to bring yourself to offer your services in the proud, resigned manner of a prince. It is a horse of another color to have those services tossed back, undesired, like a box of unripe

gerie tape."—disapprovingly. Grawn sniffed.

"The Lord knows I'd like to!" huffily remarked Mat.

"Well, I'm busy now, but drop in this afternoon," genially invited Smith.

"Can't,"—curtly. "I'm employed, as I said—and as your ad. preferred!—in a large mercantile house which has an odd prejudice against its employees running around outside during working hours."

"Oh, to be sure,"—apologetically. "Some other noon, then."

On the way back to work Mat encountered Lenora Holcomb. He recognized the elderly man beside her as her employer. Together they passed through the swinging doors of a restaurant where palms were more in evidence than doughnuts, and silver-banded carafes than cream puffs.

"Bet if I was Clarence, that would stop," scorned Mat.

That afternoon Clarence himself strolled to the notions counter. "Matty, old grub, let me tell you my scheme. You know that garbage site the city council is haggling over—"

Mat had to attend to an irritated old man whose wife had sent him for olive skirt braid, and so missed Clarence's next five sentences, although afterward he remembered having subconsciously sensed a taut undertwang to the free and easy flow. When the braid had been found, Clarence was enthusing, "—and you see with three thousand for an option, I couldn't stop myself making thirty thousand!"

"Smoke up while the smoking's good," laughed Mat. Holcomb most always had schemes and natty cravats—and not much else. He added carelessly: "I saw Lenora at noon."

Enthusiasm dropped from young Holcomb's face, leaving it expressionless. "Did you?" He nervously fingered a bunch of kid curlers in the compartment before him. "I expected to meet her for lunch. But—I missed her. Was she—Where'd you see her?"

"Couple of streets over,"—evasively.

"I suppose with—" He broke off. Then: "Gee, I gotta make money, Mat! I—there's reasons."

**I**N the evening a hurdy-gurdy set Mat's mother to reminiscing. "If Felkins had been honest, you might have studied music and been famous, Mat. When you were only four years old, you'd listen to hurdy-gurdies by the hour."

"Never mind," said Mat.

"But I do mind!"—with the wild abandon of a weak, tired nature. "I lie awake at night and see his smiling oldish face. And I hear him sneeze; how you

children used to giggle at that sneeze! You were only seven years old when you said his slick brown hair was just like my sealskin coat. Dear me! to think there was a time when I wore sealskin!"

"You might again!"

"No, never,"—sadly. "Oh, Mat, you think I don't realize how hard it is for you to be tied all your life to poorly paid, monotonous work. But I do—and I ache—and cry."

"Shucks, Mother,"—comfortingly. "I might get into something better some day."

"Mat! Don't you dare!" she shrieked in panic.

**A** WEEK later Irma asked: "Mat, are you ever going to marry me?"

For answer, Mat shook an indignant face over the café's thick coffee cup.

"Please marry me, Mat!"

"I won't,"—coldly. And when she said again, "Please!" he said hotly, "I won't!"

"Very well. I sha'n't ask you again. Never."

"Very well," said Mat in a tone which he intended to sound relieved.

Silently they ate two cuts of lemon cream pie. When each had finished, even to the hard white glaze, Irma said casually, rising: "After this week, I can't meet you so often at noon. I'm going to work way down on Van Buren—for Bairly, the realty man."

"That's the old blue-gilled chap Lenora Holcomb works for!"

"Lenora is leaving—for a better position. So she sent me word to apply. I get twelve dollars. Lenora"—a bit enviously—"gets eighteen at her new place. But she could take dictation from a forest of parrots and never mislay a comma."

Mat scowled. "I can't say I fancy the idea of you working for him."

Irma shrugged her shoulders. And Mat's scowl faded swiftly, leaving a hurt, sickish look in his eyes. Just so had he often seen Lenora Holcomb shrug her shoulders at Clarence.

**T**HE next noon, he called again upon Smith, Grawn & Company. Grawn and the pert typist were out. Alone with



Smith, Mat felt more at ease. Also he was in a more determined mood than before. So he talked up, and demanded the real meaning of that "discreet" ad.

Mr. Smith first found out how badly Mat needed money. Then he readily unfolded the meaning. Mr. Brader likely had a large circle of acquaintances in the department store where he was employed. If he sold each acquaintance one or more shares of Smith & Grawn Realty Company's stock, at five dollars a share, keeping forty per cent of each five dollars for himself, he would make a considerable sum. If he sold considerable shares, Smith and Grawn would be delighted. And they would always take care of him.

"How much are the shares worth?" blandly demanded Mat, "—outside the printing bill?"

"What do you mean, young man?"

"What do they represent?"

Mr. Smith was hurt. Offendedly he put forth a lengthy explanation from which Mat gathered that the shares represented land which the realty company would own when it had sold enough shares to buy it. Then the company would erect—by the mortgage process—modern rentable cottages all over this land. As soon as the cottages drew rent, stockholders would collect dividends—

"Or a bunch of exclamation points!" said Mat rudely. He was disappointed. He had not expected it to be so raw.

Mr. Smith was insulted and pained.

"I don't like the way you talk," he protested. "But I like your looks and bearing. I think you're the type that can be of use to us. In two months you'll be wearing an Astrachan-collared overcoat—"

"And in six months maybe stripes," said the disappointed Mat.

Mr. Smith got nasty. "I'd as soon wear stripes as eight-fifty cotton serge."

"Ten-fifty," corrected Mat. "I wouldn't. Good-day."

He resolutely put Smith out of his mind for two weeks and ate solitary sandwich-and-pie lunches. Then one noon, while he chanced to be walking two blocks with Lenora, he met Smith. Mat and Lenora had just agreed as to the bitterness of a world wherein some

folks own a string of motors and others have not even a clear title to shank's mare. Mr. Smith urbanely raised an expensive hat and smiled suavely at them.

The man's urbanity and smiling prosperity acted upon Mat as honey acts on dry bread. Twenty-four hours later, Smith was handing him a prospectus. "Go a bit slow at first. You'll soon get your speed up," he advised.

THAT afternoon, when business permitted, Mat conned the prospectus.

"What's that?" curiously asked Africk, who worked at the same counter.

"Oh—nothing."

Africk had the persistence of a weakling. "Aw, tell me."

To get rid of him, Mat partly told him.

"And you wasn't going to let me in on a deal like that?" reproached Africk. "I think you're mean!" With quick, eager fingers, he pulled a bill from an inner vest pocket. "Here! I was saving this five toward a swell new spring suit, but as long as there's a chance to invest it—"

"Say, I don't want it!" cried Mat. "I'm not sure this firm is square—"

"Aint you mean!" pouted Africk.

"You wont let a fellow in—you want to hog it all yourself! I wouldn't do you such a shabby trick!" He pushed the bill into Mat's hand.

"I'm not taking candy from babies," —wrathfully. "You give me a pain! Keep your money if you ever want to see it again—here!"

"Please, Brader!" There were tears in Africk's high nasal voice. He pushed the bill into Mat's hand again. The ubiquitous floorman saw him. The prospectus had fallen outside the counter to the floor. A floorman picked it up.

"Oh—ho!" he exclaimed. "So, Mr. Brader! Taking advantage of your position of trust here to inveigle unwary fellow employees—I guess we can dispense with your services. You may go and get your time-check."

After a good and genuine explanation had been unlistened to, Mat, gray around the eyelids and white around the mouth, went and got the time-check.

Then he loitered on State Street until the usual time to go home.

Now, in early morning, State Street is a brisk, musical, feet-tapping overture to the day's work. At noon, State Street is the spirited, melodic *tum-tum* which introduces the second act. In its hurrying, homing six o'clock crush, State Street is the thrilling ensemble which signifies the end of the show. But State Street in mid-afternoon, when you ought to be working and can't, is a long, loud discord that is agony to your ears.

When Mat met Clarence Holcomb in the street car that evening, his "Hello" was melancholy.

Clarence too had the featural gloom that goes with cirrhosis and a cold in the head. "Come home with me for supper," he invited gloomily.

Mat declined. "Lenora doesn't want to fuss around cooking for company after working down town all day."

"Oh,"—savagely,—“we'll cook it ourselves. Lenora has another position. The perquisites include dinners—as well as luncheons.”

But Clarence's ramparts of reserve were down—kicked out from within. "I've gotta make money,"—forlornly. "She thinks I don't care—or don't tumble. But if I aint a Solomon, I got gump-tion enough to know how it'll end,"—miserably oblivious of listeners.

Mat was uncomfortably silent.

"Course I don't feel like butting in with any husbandly authority of Don't-touch-his-tainted-planked-steak when the best I can hand the poor kid is a ham sandwich."

"Let's get off and walk this last mile," suggested Mat, conscious that the passengers near-by had laid down their papers to listen.

**A**LTHOUGH in consequence of the walking, Mat was late reaching home, his mother was not there, nor was supper ready. Helen explained that Mrs. Brader had heard an old friend was dying at the county hospital. Mat set the table and made the coffee, then read the paper to Helen—who was not greatly interested in a world she was about to leave—until his mother hurried in. "Mat, it's a shame for you not to find supper

ready after working so hard all day!" Mat flushed, and asked whom she had seen.

"An old man your father knew,"—gently. "And not a soul to sit beside him but me. And that dreary hospital! This is no world for poor folks."

"I had an idea it was,"—grimly.

He left home in the morning at the usual time, pecked avidly at want ads., as a young pullet pecks at cornflakes, drew back countless times as disappointedly as a pullet from sawdust, and at five-thirty found himself—as he knew all day he would find himself!—shooting up in an elevator of the Jawnahhan Building.

He feared the office of Smith & Grawn would be closed. But Smith was there alone. He was not so urbane as usual. He explained that he had a cold.

"Darn this lake breeze," he said irritably. "What success so far?"

"I sold one share, and I—got fired for selling it."

A distinct shade of disapproval flitted over Mr. Smith's face. But it was immediately lost in the wry grimace caused by suppressing a sneeze.

"That was unfortunate,"—drily. "Very."

"But I think,"—eagerly.

"I don't think you can be of much use to us then," said Mr. Smith. "We prefer men in daily touch with other men." He paused to cough. "Back East we have a climate—not a cold vapor bath."

"Could you give me other work?" asked Mat meekly.

"Don't think so. Since you are discharged, your presence at the store would not be tolerated. And I daresay you do not know many people outside the store—"

A sneeze came, which refused to be suppressed: a loud, explosive sneeze. It began with the low rumble of a truck wheel on asphalt; it rose to a screech, fluttered on the air like the whirl of many wings, then shrilled plaintively into silence. And it shook the frosted glass of the door, wafted the letters from Smith's desk, jiggled the waste basket at his feet—and shivered the locked doors of memory in Matthew Brader's mind.

Where and when had he heard just

such a sneeze? Why, that man Felkins, of course. His mother had recalled it, not many evenings before.

He looked at Smith's sleek dark brown hair. Thinner now, of course, more like well-worn velvet than sealskin. But fifteen years could not fail to thin a man's hair. The long, suave profile did not respond so readily to memory, but hair and sneeze were in themselves quite sufficient.

"You?" said Mat.

"Beg pardon?" said Smith, returning his handkerchief to his pocket. "Confound this cold and this climate."

"So you can't use me," said Mat. He did not crouch physically, but his whole hot soul was ready to leap.

"Don't think so. Unless you get another position."

"But you found yourself able once to use something belonging to me?"

Smith looked amazed. "What do you mean?"

"You know well enough. How much will you pay to escape arrest?"

"What?"

"How much?"—curtly.

"Why—you—you—I'll have you arrested!"

"I think not. You know who I am. Don't bluff. You know that I can walk from this office to the nearest police station or 'phone,"—grimly—"and the morning papers will have an item that'll yellow their front pages brighter than the sun yellows buttercups. But I've got sense enough to know that your punishment wouldn't reimburse me financially—"

"This is blackmail! Whatever you've been told, I swear—"

"Swear till you're resurrected," said Mat. "Fork up—or be forked over to jail and the newspapers."

"Jail nothing! Such talk is preposterous!"

Mat waved a hand at the safe. He shrewdly calculated that the man might skip before morning.

"W-w-why, I'll pitch you out this window!" Smith lunged at him. They clenched, swayed, snarled, choked, wrestled, pummeled—until steps passed the outer door. Simultaneously they relaxed; the older man conscious of his slighter

strength; the younger anxious for money before anyone interfered.

"If it wasn't for my wife and children, you scoundrel—" snarled Smith. "Oh, you've got me. I'll give you a thousand dollars."

"And then some."

"Not a cent more"

In the end, Mat compromised on five thousand dollars, four in cash, the remainder in negotiable securities—not shares of the Smith & Grawn Realty Company, however. In return he signed a promise not to prosecute Smith for any "fancied offense." The words were Smith's choice. Mat felt rather cowardly and said so. His conscience really demanded that Smith be put in prison.

"But the money looks too good," sneered Smith.

"It does," acknowledged Mat candidly.

"Bah—you cheap bound!"

MAT did not tell his mother the source of his sudden good fortune. She was too vindictive, and he had given Smith his word that there would be no punishment. Evasively he explained that Clarence Holcomb was a versatile schemer. Mrs. Brader was easily deceived. She took good fortune as she had taken poor—dazedly, stupidly. Later Mat substantiated his own evasive story by supplying the three thousand dollars to finance Clarence's scheme. He found him gloomier than a sick rabbit.

"Lenora lost her position," he confided morosely. "And she accused me of queering her with the man. And I never dreamed of such a thing. Say, where did you get this money? Hold on—don't tell me. I might not want to take it." Then he contradicted himself savagely. "What a whopper! I'd take it if you sneaked it in pennies from newsboys. And in fourteen days, I'll give you back—halves all right?—fifteen thousand. And in two months—of course you understand, this is a sure thing, but it might fall through. You can't lose, but you might—"

"I can afford to lose it." And Mat went off to meet Irma, who had refused to marry him till she got her clothes ready.



The sneeze shook the glass of the door and wafted the letters from Smith's desk.

AFTER marriage and prosperity and happiness had become every-day matters, Mat's mother timidly asked him: "Matty dear, it's a good deal to ask, but—could you forgive Felkins?"

"Why, I don't know. Have you seen him?"—sharply.

"Yes. You remember that night I was

pile. I wonder what the old gent thought you were accusing him of. He must have done something in his time that lay heavy on his soul." Then Clarence showed a gold mesh bag. "Swell, hey? As long as I can give Lenora this stuff she don't accuse me of things I haven't done, like queering her with Smith, Grawn & Co."

An earnest look came over Mat's face. "What?" he said. For he remembered once meeting Mr. Smith while Lenora

"Oh, my Lord!" weakly said her son.



late to supper? He died then. I held his hand. He had wandered from place to place, and finally found out where we were, and sent me word. I—I forgave him. He had suffered. You remember his silky dark hair. It was white."

"Oh, my Lord!" weakly said her son.

He told Clarence, omitting names. Clarence was much edified. "I'm glad you didn't find it out till we'd made our

was beside him. At the time he had taken Smith's suave smile all to himself. Was it possible—

"I'll send the money back anonymously," said Mat.

**Another story by Ida M. Evans will be in the next—the April—issue.**



ILLUSTRATED  
BY F. FOX

# The Adventures of a One-Eyed Doll

*THE plain tale of the events which followed  
its fall under the feet of Mr. Maxwell Jenks.*

By Ralph Bergengren



MR. MAXWELL JENKS, returning late, but perfectly sober, from celebrating his forty-third birthday with other bachelors, knew the geography of 64 Charlton Street so well that the utter darkness of the lower hallway caused him no hesitation whatever. He had the points of the compass.

He closed the front door, set a straight course for the stairway, and followed it with such undeviating security that he nearly fell over an unexpected impediment to navigation. If the thing hadn't moved when he struck it, the surprised navigator would have found the stairs with his head instead of his feet.

Mr. Jenks was not a profane man, but he immediately uttered what is often described as a smothered curse. He re-

covered his equilibrium, struck a match, and the tiny flame illuminated his thin, intelligent face, wearing round-rimmed tortoise-shell spectacles and an expression unhappily appropriate to the wicked words he had just been saying. Between himself and the stairs the derelict floated gently on four wheels—a doll's *perambulator*—a ridiculous imitation, as Mr. Jenks would have described it at a calmer moment, of the most ridiculous vehicle known to civilization. The match lasted long enough for him to spurn the silly thing out of his way with a disgusted foot; and he repeated the wicked words as he started upstairs in the dark. But he had lost his accustomed confidence. He guided himself by the banisters. Mentally, if not physically, he had been successfully upset.

For some weeks past, Mr. Jenks had had to admit, grudgingly, that he was getting too easily upset. His health was all right; but his nervous system was like a chair with three legs, on which people and events were constantly try-

ing to sit down. This birthday dinner, for example, had been a fatuous bore from one end to the other. Episodes in his law practice frequently sat down on that three-legged chair: the fussiness of clients, the stupidity of juries, the irritation of dictating your finest thoughts to a fool of a stenographer who stopped you in the middle and made you say them all over from the beginning.

Mr. Jenks (dictating): "I do not appeal to sentiment (comma) but I do say this (colon) let us be careful (comma) gentlemen (comma) that we do not add to the world's burden of grief the weight of one unnecessary tear (semi-colon) that we do not—"

Miss Brown: "Beg pardon?"

Even his doctor sat down on it.

"Work all you please and as hard as you please," said the doctor, "but *balance* it. Get an interest, something to take you out of yourself. And don't put it off much longer."

Really, one might have thought that Mr. Jenks wanted to be a lunatic, and the doctor was trying to persuade him, tactfully, that he wouldn't enjoy it.

With all his caution, halfway up the stairs Mr. Jenks stepped squarely on



He felt like a gentleman burglar.

something soft. It wriggled and emitted a faint but piercing squeak almost like human speech. He experienced instantly all the condensed but poignant emotions of a man who has stepped on a snake. His heart, an organ that had never been seriously touched by woman, made a spasmodic jump; his foot stopped going down and came up again as if he had a spring in it; he stood on the other and clung desperately to the banister. There is, as we all know, an indescribable horror about unexpected contact with an object at once soft and invisible; but fortunately a brave man quickly recovers his faculties.

The ascending lawyer struck another match to see what he had stepped on, and discovered the doll that belonged in the perambulator—a large, untidy creature of French extraction. He had stepped on its stomach. Mr. Jenks picked it up gingerly, and, in the light of his match, one blue eye—he now saw the doll had no other—opened automatically and regarded him with a fixed and serious interest. It seemed to say, "I am only one eye, but I can see as much as most dolls do with a couple. Who are you?" Mr. Jenks shook his captive viciously and hurled it



He could hear her plainly —  
rock — rock —  
rock — rock!



from him to the foot of the stairway. "Mar-mar!" he said sarcastically.

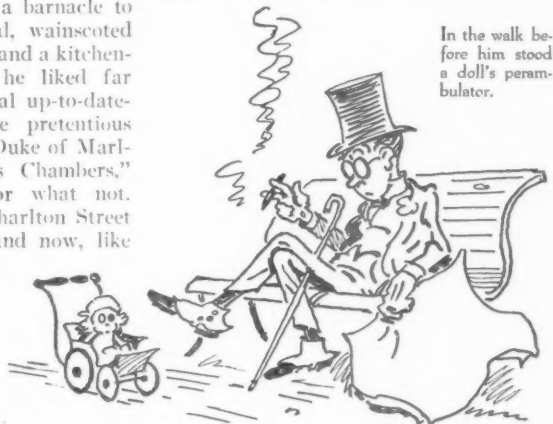
Maxwell Jenks had lived for twelve years at 64 Charlton Street, but the thirteenth was unlucky. There were signs—and stepping on a doll in the dark was the latest of them—that made him think he would be unable to live there much longer. During these twelve years, 64 Charlton Street, although not so described in the lease, had always been a bachelor apartment-house, and Mr. Jenks had come to take it for granted that it always would be. The house was small, an old-time residence made over into suites, and Mr. Jenks was attached to his own suite with all the confirmed tenacity of a barnacle to a rock. The old-fashioned, wainscoted rooms had an atmosphere (and a kitchenette) of their own that he liked far better than the conventional up-to-date-ness of newer and more pretentious apartment houses—your "Duke of Marlborough," your "Lucullus Chambers," your "Prince Regent," or what not. From the beginning, 64 Charlton Street had exactly suited him—and now, like a barnacle at low water, he felt unseen fingers trying to drag him away from his comfortable anchorage.

He had heard vaguely that the house had changed owners, but as Briggs & Briggs still remained the connecting link between owner and tenants, the change had not struck him as material to his own comfort. Suite 4, directly over his head, had been some time untenanted, but it had never occurred to him that Briggs & Briggs would ruin the tradition of the house simply to rent one suite. They would know better.

Nevertheless a *female tenant* had taken possession—and had brought a child with her. Smash went tradition! Mr. Jenks was no woman-hater, but against these new neighbors he had conceived a quick and vivid animosity. Sixty-four Charlton Street was no place for them. Without meaning to liken 64 Charlton Street to the front elevation of a pig, a woman in Suite 4 was as out of place as the Bible tells us

a jewel is in a pig's snout. She was a false note. She ended the delightful informality of living at one's ease in a houseful of bachelors. For example: Mr. Jenks, before he shaved in the morning, had been used to trotting downstairs in his pajamas and getting his paper from the hall table.

So far, he had not seen the new tenants, for he was away all day; but he had heard them at night, talking, talking, talking long past the hour when any sensible woman would have put any sensible child to bed. They played games. Twice, when he was dressing to go out to dinner, his door-knob had rattled—a man *had* to lock his door now, and that was another



In the walk before him stood a doll's perambulator.

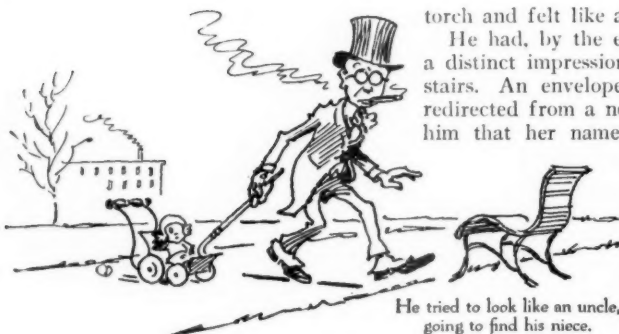
grievance; and although a feminine voice had said (with truth), "The gentleman doesn't want you to call on him, dearie," Dearie had been difficult to detach from the door-knob.

But when Dearie took to leaving her obnoxious playthings where the gentleman might fall over them, it seemed to Mr. Jenks that the wormiest worm would express an opinion. He put on his dressing gown and wrote a letter to Briggs & Briggs.

BRIGGS & BRIGGS,  
999 Columbus Building.

Gentlemen: May I call your attention to the careless and annoying habit of some tenant at 64 Charlton Street of leaving in the hall a doll's perambulator?

Although physically harmless by daylight, such a vehicle becomes in the



dark a positive menace to other tenants. To be incapacitated by an automobile is one of the necessary risks of modern civilization, but the constant danger of being incapacitated by an imitation baby carriage seems distinctly unnecessary. My lease, unless I am mistaken, implies a reasonably safe passage to my apartment.

Will you, therefore, kindly notify this tenant to keep his perambulator, also his doll, in his own apartment?

Very truly yours,  
MAXWELL JENKS.

Mr. Jenks was especially pleased with his sarcastic assumption that at 64 Charlton Street the tenant with the doll and perambulator must necessarily be masculine.

To which Briggs & Briggs replied promptly, but apparently with no sense of humor whatever:

MR. MAXWELL JENKS,  
64 Charlton Street.

Dear Sir: Yours of the twenty-sixth received and contents noted.

Be assured that you will have no further trouble with doll and perambulator.

Respectfully,  
BRIGGS & BRIGGS.  
(C)

Briggs & Briggs were very business-like gentlemen, and an unknown, heartless entity called "C" usually attended to their correspondence.

Nevertheless the perambulator remained symbolic. Mr. Jenks could not see it as he came and went, but he discovered that it was still there under the stairway, a lurking menace, likely at any time to sneak out and prowl around in the dark. He purchased an electric

torch and felt like a gentleman burglar.

He had, by the end of a few weeks, a distinct impression of the woman upstairs. An envelope on the hall table, redirected from a neighboring city, told him that her name was Treves—Mrs.

John Treves. She got only the one letter, but the child—Miss Antoinette Treves—seemed to have a number of correspondents.

Mrs. Treves, so Maxwell decided, was a large, stout, foolishly-placid woman, who spent all her spare time inanely rocking herself back and forth in a chair made for that purpose. He could hear her plainly—*rock—rock—rock—rock—rock—rock*. He got to listening for it; he got so that he seemed to hear it in his office. A heavy woman, with a heavy mind and a heavy "social manner"—just the kind of woman, in short, who would take an apartment in what had always been a bachelor house. Mr. Jenks wished that the rocking-chair habit was fatal, but apparently it was merely insidious: the more one rocked the more one enjoyed it.

But he wouldn't get out! He felt that it was a battle between them, and that the knowledge of his departure would somehow give pleasure to the woman upstairs. She would rock with a more insane satisfaction than ever.

Then one afternoon, while he was dressing for dinner, he heard a new sound, an interminable whistling. He went out in the hall and listened.

That night he again wrote to Briggs & Briggs.

BRIGGS & BRIGGS,  
999 Columbus Building.

Gentlemen: May I call your attention to the fact that a tenant at 64 Charlton Street is keeping a canary.

This may seem a small matter. But as it is a rule of the house that tenants shall not keep dogs, I beg to point out that a canary makes a much more continuous noise than a dog and is proportionately more annoying.

I trust something will be done at once to abate this minor nuisance.

Very truly yours,  
MAXWELL JENKS.

To which Briggs & Briggs answered:

MR. MAXWELL JENKS,  
64 Charlton Street.

Dear Sir: Yours of the tenth received and contents noted.

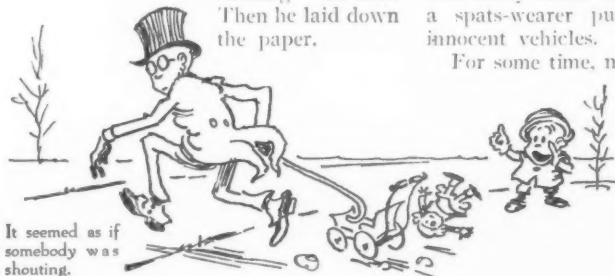
We regret to advise you that canaries are not dogs, and we are therefore powerless in the matter. Kindly inform us at once if tenant in question sets up a dog.

Respectfully,  
BRIGGS & BRIGGS.  
(C)

Canaries fortunately do not sing in the evening.

A week after his latest exchange of polite correspondence with Briggs & Briggs, Maxwell Jenks sat on a bench in the Public Garden finishing his newspaper and cigar before returning to what could no longer fairly be called his home. Charlton Street was just around the corner from the Garden, and the afternoon was one of those early December days when summer seems to have come back for something that she had forgotten. Here and there, foreign-born parents watched their progeny in process of amalgamation and chattered volubly in various languages. Two or three Irish gardeners were clearing up scattered leaves. It was what the old-fashioned geography books might have called a typical "scene in America," and Mr. Jenks looked rather out of place in it. He had come across the Garden reading his newspaper as he walked, and had sat down and crossed his neatly-creased tweed trouser legs without raising his eyes from it. He wore spats and carried a walking stick.

He finished one column and glanced casually over the top of the paper before starting another. Then he laid down the paper.



It seemed as if somebody was shouting.

In the walk before him—and it was a wonder he hadn't fallen over it—stood a perambulator; and in it a one-eyed doll sat up stiffly and regarded him with a fixed expression of hostile recognition. The glare of that one wide, blue eye seemed to say plainly, "Throw me downstairs again, will you?"

Mr. Jenks changed his seat, selecting one where he could see the doll but the doll could not see him.

Evidently, in their usual careless fashion, Mrs. Treves and the Child had left the garden and forgotten the perambulator. Whatever else she might be, Mrs. Treves was not one of our citizens-in-process; and at that moment she and her "dearie" were plainly not in the immediate neighborhood.

Like all men who wear spats, Maxwell Jenks had a profound distaste for perambulators. He was a bachelor because, all things considered, he had never wanted to take the serious step of matrimony; put it another way, because he was a He who had never met the corresponding Her. Such things happen to cautious natures. He had, nevertheless, an ideal of matrimony, which wept and wrung its hands whenever he saw a man, a woman, and a perambulator. It was as if the group was marked individually:

*This is Father.*

*This is Mother.*

*This is the Baby.*

Mr. Jenks' ideal of the Married State recoiled from advertising it in this common manner. Nothing, he had often said, would or could ever persuade him to push a baby carriage. Men who wear spats, whatever may be the psychological explanation, are all agreed on the subject of perambulators; and the reader will easily recall that he has never seen a spats-wearer pushing one of these innocent vehicles.

For some time, nobody but Mr. Jenks noticed the one-eyed doll. Then a short, fat man, with curly black hair, and pushing a real perambulator himself—it is needless to say that he wore no spats—

approached the obnoxious center of Mr. Jenks' undivided attention. The vehicle contained twins and was accompanied by a large, fat female who led two more of these remarkable doubles, each by



one hand, and was preceded, followed, and otherwise surrounded by miscellaneous progeny. They all looked like their father. They engulfed the one-eyed doll in its baby carriage, and one of the miscellaneous progeny took possession of the hated perambulator. The parents saw her, and after a quick glance around their immediate vicinity, made no objection.

Mr. Jenks sat up straight, folded his newspaper with great deliberation, put it in his pocket, got up, and started with long, determined strides toward the bend in the path. He hated perambulators; he hated this imitation perambulator in particular; he hated the one-eyed doll; he hated the make-believe mother of that horrid infant; and he hated the real mother of that make-believe mother—but there was something stronger than all this hatred in Maxwell Jenks. That something said peremptorily: "Maxwell, that unassimilated bunch of American citizenship is stealing the child's doll, and you've got to stop 'em."

Hurry, spats! He turned the bend, caught up with the family, hooked the crook of his walking stick over the handle of the abducted baby carriage, and stopped it with a jerk that made the rescued occupant close her one eye and open it again with what was very much like a wink.

"Hi!" said Mr. Jenks firmly. "Here,

you! Where are you going with that—"

The family fled and left him alone with it. The one-eyed doll stared at him with a fixed expression that might have been gratitude, but seemed to Mr. Jenks to be one of selfish amusement. People on near-by benches—and in this part of the Garden more of them looked as if they had been made in America—stared at him also. He could feel them wondering where his little girl was, and whether or not he was a widower. Under the circumstances, with so many observers, Mr. Jenks felt that it would look "queer" if he abandoned the property he had just rescued. He dragged it to an empty bench and sat down beside it, trying to look as much as possible as if there was no tie between them. The thing to do, of course, was to give his treasure trove to a gardener to take care of; but the afternoon was passing, and unless he saw a gardener pretty soon they would all have gone home for the night.

The facts confronted Mr. Jenks that he must find a gardener and that he must take the perambulator with him: he and the one-eyed doll must search together. He got up with considerable dignity, hooked his walking stick over the handle, and started.

Mr. Jenks tried to look like an uncle, going to find his niece.

In ten minutes Mr. Jenks had not yet found a gardener, but an interested group of observers had found Mr. Jenks. He heard them behind him, footsteps, voices, interested theories about where he was going and what he intended to do



with the perambulator—but he refused to look back.

"Yer losin' your doll, Mister," said a voice excitedly at his elbow. "She's fallin' out."

"Thank you," said Mr. Jenks gravely. He put the doll back and resumed his progress. But this time he turned toward the exit from the Garden and quickened his steps. He had given up all hope of finding a gardener, but he remembered that there was a cab-stand just outside the Garden. He would make a dash for it, throw the perambulator into a cab, leap after it, and be driven to 64 Charlton Street. He initiated his dash, and knew without looking that all the hopeful observers were dashing after him. It even seemed as if somebody was shouting. Mr. Jenks was not what could fairly be called running, but he was now moving so rapidly that a hand on his shoulder stopped him with no little loss of personal dignity.

"I've gotcher, you dollnaper!" said the man behind the hand coarsely. "Come along easy now, my fine feller!"

Mr. Jenks turned indignantly—the indignation was his own contribution, for the hand turned him with a skillful twist that disordered his necktie—and found himself confronting a fat policeman and a thin lady, both very much out of breath. The policeman had him by the collar, and the lady was examining the perambulator.

"This is Antoinette," said the lady, holding up the occupant of the perambu-

lator for the policeman's inspection. "You see, as I told you, she has only one eye, but it works perfectly. She's named after me—" Excitement often emphasizes unimportant details. "I felt sure it was *our* perambulator when those people told me a man had gone off with one. And how lucky it was that I met you when I was following him!" And she looked contemptuously at Maxwell Jenks.

Mr. Jenks, although the policeman had him by the collar, was still a gentleman. He took off his hat. He knew immediately that this *must* be the mother of the child that owned the doll that rode in the perambulator that was kept under the stairway—the connecting links of the chain flashed absurdly through his mind as he realized the culminating unpleasantness of his present predicament. But, even in the grip of the law, he was keenly surprised by her appearance. There are thin women, not necessarily young, who are instantly likable (even, as in this extreme case, when they are having you arrested), and Mrs. John Treves was one of them. She was as unlike the Mrs. John Treves of his imagination as Mr. Maxwell Jenks was unlike a man who would steal a little girl's doll. Mrs. Treves stared at him, her contempt melting into wonder; and this emotion in turn was swallowed up by an amusement that she politely endeavored to conceal by looking superhumanly serious. But her mouth twitched, and one corner smiled in spite of her. As a lawyer Mr. Jenks was quick to see a possible line of defense.

"I don't pretend to be a living statue of incorruptible honesty," he said earnestly, "but do I look like a man who would steal a one-eyed doll?"

"You did, from behind," declared Mrs. Treves. "You were almost running away with it."

"I beg yer pardon, sir," said the policeman suddenly, and took his strong hand from Mr. Jenks' coat collar. "I guess I've put my foot in it, sir. Lord! the minute I see yer face I thought I'd seen it before. *He's* all right," he added, turning to Mrs. Treves. "One of our best-known lawyers, *he* is! Mr. Jenks—Maxwell Jenks."

"Oh!" exclaimed Mrs. Treves. "Oh! Not the Mr. Jenks who lives at 64 Charlton Street—"

"I don't know where he lives, madam," said the officer, "but I've heard him speak in court. There aint many others like him—"

"I *am* that Jenks," admitted Maxwell, straightening his necktie. "I don't blame you, Officer, but for Heaven's sake shoo away the populace." The policeman obediently began shooing. "Now the truth about this silly business, Mrs. Treves—"

"Miss Treves," corrected the other. "Mrs. Treves is my sister-in-law."

"Oh!" said Maxwell. "Oh! Then you don't live—"

"Yes, I do," said Miss Treves. "Temporarily. Beatrice, my niece, Antoinette, her child and myself. We're living there because the other children at home are taking turns coming down with the chicken pox, and the house was quarantined while Beatrice and I were away on a visit. Antoinette, fortunately, had been left out in the wood-shed. You see, we came back just as they were putting up the notice on the front door, and as Mrs. Treves owns 64 Charlton Street, we made a bee line for the empty apartment. Gracious!" Miss Treves looked dismayed as she found how much of a stoop was necessary before she could reach the handle of the rescued perambulator. "It's too low to push, and too heavy to carry! Why didn't I think to bring Beatrice!"

"That was my trouble," said Mr. Jenks. "I needed a Beatrice. I rescued this perambulator *and* Antoinette, Miss Treves, from some young Americans-in-the-making—and I didn't know what to do with it. I went seeking a gardener; but the gardeners are all dead. Then I decided—" Here Mr. Jenks glanced toward the cab-stand, hesitated, changed the direction of his remark, and continued: "Then I decided to take it

home myself. I was beginning to attract attention and I suppose that I hurried involuntarily."

"The effect," said Miss Treves, smiling at the recollection, "was certainly one of haste."

"The fact is," continued Mr. Jenks, "that a man—er—alone with a perambulator attracts much attention, whereas a man and woman—er—together with a perambulator attract none whatever. Now I have acquired considerable skill in dragging this vehicle with my walking stick—and if we take it home together—"

Mr. Jenks smiled hopefully. When he wanted to be persuasive he had a very pleasant way with him.

"That will be just the thing," said Antoinette Treves. "Hook on, Mr. Jenks."

THAT evening Mr. Jenks, staying at home with a book for company, heard a familiar sound—

*Rock—rock—rock—rock—rock—rock*

—and, although it was directly over his head, it didn't seem to annoy him. In fact it was rather pleasant. Although he didn't yet know it, he had found an "interest," something to take him out of himself.

And in Suite 4 the occupant of the rocking chair rocked and rocked and admitted to herself that Mr. Maxwell Jenks was an interesting neighbor and she was glad to be on speaking terms with him.

And downstairs in her perambulator Antoinette's solitary eye, with which she saw as much as most dolls do with a couple, was closed in restful slumber. Her expression was that of a doll who knew that Mr. Maxwell Jenks would never again throw her downstairs, no matter how often he might step on her in the dark.



OF COURSE you remember Mr. Terhune's "The Happiness of Three Women," in the

October Red Book. This is the sequel to that story of a seemingly harmless auto ride that Constance Barr and Billy Craig started on while waiting for the six-thirty train—she waiting for the husband who had ordered Craig to stay away from his house, and he for his fiancée: a spin that developed punctured tires, and that, amidst numerous breakdowns, went into the dark hours of the night, circled in a gasoline chase into a disreputable road-house, thence to the high road, past



Fletcher, the bank cashier in his touring car, and then—without discovery—home.

Next morning came the news that Fletcher had robbed his bank of \$15,000—and at the exact time that Constance and Craig had seen him far out on the country road. They knew he must be innocent—but if they gave testimony for him, who would believe their ride was innocent? Craig had to decide what path to take, and at the end of the story, Mr. Terhune left the reader to make his own guess

as to that decision. ■ ■ ■ ■ ■  
This is the story of how it all worked out. ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

"THE DECISION," A SEQUEL TO

## The Happiness of Three Women

By Albert Payson Terhune

**C**ONSTANCE BARR had made her body as comfortable as her mind was ill at ease, by disposing herself, pussy-cat fashion, in the biggest chair in the sunniest corner of Craig's law office. There she sat, to the casual onlooker a picture of lazy content.

But the casual onlooker, to gain such an idea, must have missed the tears she was so resolutely winking back, and the tense clench of her little gloved hands that spoke of mind-torture.

Presently she looked up from the unconscious industry of ripping to tatters a quite defenseless lace handkerchief. Craig, for whom she was waiting, came

ILLUSTRATED  
BY J. HENRY

in from the street, crossed his anteroom and paused at the inner office's door facing her.

What she read, clear as printed words, in his brooding eyes as he stood there looking at her, made her jump to her feet and run impulsively toward him.

"Billy!" she exclaimed, in stark terror, "you're not going to do it? You're not! Why—why, Billy, he'll kill me."

Craig did not answer at once. And when he spoke it was not to voice the decision that had crystallized in his mind—and which his eyes had told her. He put off the inevitable moment.

"I didn't expect to find you still here," he said, not over-cordially.

"Didn't expect to?" she echoed.



"What did you think I'd be doing? Paying calls or running into the city for the day? What does the prisoner do, while the jury's out, but wait? What else was there for me to do but wait; and to wish I was dead? And now that you've brought in the verdict—"

"The verdict? *I'm* not your judge. I'm your fellow-prisoner. I have decided. But, either way, there's nothing but straight sky-blue hell ahead for both of us."

"No, no!" she denied, eagerly. "There isn't, Billy. Not if you decide for—for *us*. Mark will never know, Myrtle Gale will never know—"

"And, to prevent your husband and the girl I'm engaged to, from finding out, I'm to keep my mouth shut and let an innocent man—a man with a wife and children—go to State's Prison for bank robbery?"

"Billy, Mr. Fletcher and his family are nothing to you. And Myrtle and I are—"

"They're nothing to me?" repeated Craig, drearily. "You're right. But they will be something to me for the rest of my life, if I do what you want me to. They'll be the people whose lives I'll have wrecked, when a word from me could have saved them. I'd have to raise a beard, Constance. For I'd never have the courage to look at myself in my shaving-glass again. No, there's only one thing for me to do. I've weighed it, fifty times in the past two hours—ever since I read the story of the robbery in the Blank Terrace *Bulletin*, this morning. And the amount is the same at each weighing. There's only one answer."

"But—"

"Besides, there's another angle of this rotten business that you haven't taken into account: I'm a lawyer. That means I'm an officer of the court. And it means I've taken oath to do all in my power to uphold the ends of justice."

"Justice is due to me as much as to Mr. Fletcher!" she cried, unreasonable in her fright. "Billy, you've got to stand by me!"

"Why? Why more than by Fletcher?"

"Because I'm a woman."

"So is Fletcher's wife—an invalid at that."

"Billy Craig, you got me into this scrape. You *can't* leave me in it."

"You're right," he assented, grimly. "I can't—even if I wanted to. I'm in it as deep as you are. But as for having gotten you into it—"

"I know!" she interrupted, momentarily all remorse. "It wasn't fair for me to say that. It was all my fault. I suggested doing it. But how could I know—how could *anyone* know—it was going to turn out so *impossibly*? It seemed a harmless enough thing, when I'd gone to the station to meet Mark and you'd gone there to meet Myrtle and neither of them came back from the city on that train—it seemed a simple and harmless enough thing for me to suggest we run out in your car to the Hook Road and back, before the next train was due. What harm was there in *that*? How could I know we'd take the wrong short-cut back and miss our way and get lost in those horrible mountain roads in the rain and the dark for six mortal hours and wind up where we did? Who could have foretold such a crazy thing?"

"What's more to the point," observed Craig, "who will *believe* such a crazy thing? It isn't what really happens, that counts, in such matters; it's what other people believe has happened. And who on earth would believe we got lost and blundered around these mountain roads till one o'clock? It doesn't make sense. Who would believe, on top of that, that we just *chanced* to strike the main road, again, a full twenty miles from here, at the exact spot where the Meadowside Inn stands; and that we drove into the Inn grounds without knowing what place we were entering? Who would believe all that? Not a soul. Certainly not your husband. Probably not Myrtle. Assuredly, no one else. All they would believe would be that you and I were coming out of the grounds of the Meadowside Inn at one-twenty A. M.—coming away together, at that time of night, from a roadhouse that is the most brazenly disreputable in the whole State. They would believe that much. And they'd throw away our explanation of how it happened, and substitute a much more natural explanation of their own."



"You sha'n't do it!" she cried. "You *sha'n't*. Do you think I'm going to give up my whole future—my happiness—my friends—my reputation—without a fight?"

"More natural? More vile!"

"The two, as usual, are more or less synonymous."

"All this talk gets us nowhere. Billy Craig, are you going to stand by me or not?"

"No, Constance," he said very quietly. "I'm not."

"You cad!"

"Quite so. I'm a cad not to stand by you. And I'd be a criminal if I did. I am a loser either way."

CONSTANCE'S overstrained nerves went to pieces, all at once, in a rush of hysterical weeping. Craig put out a hand as though to soothe her; then, his arm dropped to his side and he stood looking down in helpless misery at the sobbing woman. Presently, she started, galvanized by the anger of a cornered animal. Shaking the blinding tears impatiently from her eyes, she confronted the man in a blaze of fury.

"You sha'n't do it!" she cried, shrilly. "You *sha'n't*. Do you think I'm going to give up my whole future—my happiness—my friends—my reputation—without a fight? Well, I'm not. Was it *my* fault that Jonas Fletcher passed by in his car, on his way back here to Blank Terrace, just as we left Meadowside Inn; and that we had the wretched luck to be seen by him and to see him? Was it? *No!* Was it my fault that fifteen thousand dollars was stolen from the branch bank here at that exact time, and that the night watchman swears he saw Mr. Fletcher take it? Perhaps that's my fault, too? Well, if it isn't, why should I suffer for it?"

"If we suffered only for the things that were our fault," said Craig, bitterly, "the millennium of happiness would be overdue before to-day. But that isn't—"

"I tell you," insisted Constance with growing vehemence and incoherence, "I'm not going to be damned for what isn't my fault. When Mr. Fletcher became cashier of the branch bank he ought to have known he was liable to suspicion if ever the bank should be robbed. It's his own look-out. He—"

"Constance, you're talking like a baby!"

"He can take his own chances," she rushed on, unheeding. "Do you think I'm going on a witness stand and say: 'Mr. Judge, Jonas Fletcher couldn't have robbed the bank at one-twenty A. M., because Mr. Craig and I were coming out of the Meadowside Inn, together, just then; and we saw him pass us on his way here!' Do you think I'll say that—and wear the Scarlet Letter all the rest of my life, just to save Mr. Fletcher from going to jail? Mark would kill me. He'd *kill* me. The very least he'd do would be to drag me through the filthiest divorce trial his money could buy. And I'd be a social leper forever afterward. Billy, *I won't do it!*"

"There's no way out, Constance. It's the only just thing, the only clean thing—"

"Mark will kill me. Maybe he'll kill you, too. He's jealous of every man I meet; and he's crazily jealous of *you*. He always has been. And Myrtle Gale will throw you over, when she hears the story. Oh," she broke off, sobbing afresh, "I was so happy when I got home from that awful ride and found Mark was spending the night in town and that he need never know I'd been out so late with you! I was so happy I could hardly wait to come down here to your office this morning, to tell you. And then—and then, when I *did* come here, and you told me about the robbery—"

"There's only—"

"Billy!" she interrupted, struck by a sudden memory. "When you left me here, this morning, you said Mr. Fletcher had sent for you. Is—is he *determined* to say he saw us there? But of course he is. It's the only thing that could clear him. Oh, it's so—"

"No," answered Craig, "he's philosophical about that part of it. He realizes it would do *no* good for him, as a suspected felon, to say he saw us or to call us to prove his alibi, unless we are willing. And he guesses the way you'll feel about swearing away your reputation. By the way, you remember I told you that the watchman claims he found Fletcher robbing the vaults and grappled with him; and that after Fletcher

knocked him out and escaped, he found himself clutching that little gold skull watch-charm Fletcher wears? Well, Fletcher says he lost the watch-charm somewhere in the bank two days earlier. The watchman probably found it and it gave him his idea."

"Wait!" exclaimed Constance, grasping only the first part of Craig's narrative. "Wait! You say Mr. Fletcher doesn't count on our proving his alibi? Good! I'm not going to prove it!"

"You mean—?"

"I mean *you* can do what you choose. But I sha'n't say a word. And if the cross-questioning makes you tell that you were with me, I'll go on the stand and swear it isn't so, and that I was at home all evening."

"Constance!"

"Oh, I know, it's perjury. But if I'm to be damned, let it be in the next world and not in this one too. I'm going to save myself, since you aren't man enough to save me. From now on, I'm fighting my own battle in my own way. If it comes to a question of your word or mine—why, a jury will believe a woman, any day, against a man. Especially, if she's still young and not bad looking."

"Constance! You don't realize what you're saying!"

"I realize my back is to the wall and my whole life's at stake."

"You are wrong in thinking you will be believed. I—"

"Believed? Of course I shall be believed. Women always are. And, anyway, is it harder for a jury to believe my story than to believe a fragile little old fellow like Mr. Fletcher could knock a big watchman senseless?"

FOR a full half minute Craig stared at her, agape. Then into his face crept a light of growing wonder, that merged into joy.

"Constance," he said presently, with deep conviction, "you haven't a shred of conscience to your back; but you have three times my sense. Or else, I was too badly scared for my brain to do its union job. You've given me the key of the whole mystery. Listen! I've never lied to you, have I? So, you can be-

lieve I'm telling you the truth now, when I say I'm going to get you out of this. And without letting you commit perjury, either."

She looked deep into his excited eyes, and, looking, all at once she believed. Her belief was intuitive; but it was as absolute as it was illogical. A burden fell from her heart.

Sheer relief brought on a second fit of hysterical weeping. Impulsively, beside herself with gratitude, she stooped, caught up one of his hands between both of hers, and kissed it.

"Constance!" exclaimed Craig, drawing back his hand in dire embarrassment.

As he did so, he saw over his shoulder, the frankly delighted face of his office boy, beaming upon him from the doorway of the anteroom.

"What in blazes do *you* want?" demanded Craig.

"Gentleman outside there to see you, sir," announced the boy. "Mr. Mark Barr."

"Mark!" gasped Constance, aghast.

"I told him you was special busy, just now. So he told me to say his business was pressing and would you please see him a minute?"

The boy got no farther. Suddenly, through no impulse of his own, he reeled to one side, leaving the doorway clear. And through that same doorway stamped a thick-necked man in exaggeratedly correct morning clothes and in a very evident temper.

"You needn't wait," said Craig, to the boy, who reluctantly withdrew. "Mr. Barr," he continued, "it is my custom to send out word to my clients in the anteroom, when I can receive them. I do not hire an office boy to have him used as a punching bag."

He was talking to gain time; and he advanced on Barr as he spoke. Incidentally, he braced his nerves to meet the visitor's onset, when the latter should become aware of Constance's presence. Indeed, Craig wondered that after a single quick and truculent glance around the office, Mark Barr's angry little eyes returned to his unwelcoming host and remained fixed on him.

Craig allowed his own gaze to shift to the spot where Constance had been

standing. She was no longer there. Nor was she, visibly, anywhere in the room.

A screen stood before a filing cabinet in one corner. And, from one end of the screen,—horribly visible,—protruded fully three square inches of the hem of Constance's pink summer dress.

It seemed to Craig that Barr could not avoid seeing the telltale flash of color. It was almost equally miraculous to him that the woman had been able to conceal herself at all in the brief interval between the time Barr was announced and his tumultuous advent into the office.

Craig shifted his own position, so that he would not be in a line between Barr's eyes and the scrap of pink linen. As he moved, he spoke:

"Now that you've thrust yourself in here," he said, "perhaps you will take the trouble to explain your errand?"

"I came here to get an explanation; not to give one," answered Barr, threateningly.

"This is not my day for giving explanations," retorted Craig, with flippant insolence. "I reserve those, always, for the eighth day of the week. Will you kindly clear out?"

"Not till I've said what I have to say. A man came into my office, in the city, an hour ago—a man from here. He came in on business. And he happened to mention, casually, that he saw my wife out driving with you, yesterday afternoon."

"He mentioned it 'casually,' eh? I can imagine just how casual it was. But what's that got to do with—?"

"I took the first train back here," stormed Barr. "I went home, determined to have an understanding with my wife, and settle this matter once and for all. She had gone out. So I came here—I came to tell you that if I hear of your being seen in public again, with my wife, I'll horsewhip you. I—"

"You asked me once, to stop calling at your home, Mr. Barr. That was wholly within your rights and I submitted to it. If you come here with an order not to be seen in public with your wife, or with any other woman alive, I take infinite pleasure in telling you to go to blazes. And while you're waiting

to start there, suppose you choose some other place besides my office, as a waiting room."

Barr's face had grown apoplectic. He strove to speak; but his voice was thick and inaudible. He took an unsteady step toward Craig, who awaited him coolly and with a half smile.

And at that moment, of all others, the sound of a stifled but hideously distinct feminine sneeze filled the room.

**B**ARR whirled about, his glare sweeping the whole office.

"Don't be alarmed," said Craig carelessly, and not even looking around. "When you were announced, I looked for some scene of threats and abuse. And I sent my stenographer behind the screen there to take down our talk. I fancied, you see, that you'd speak rather more freely if you didn't know you were going on record."

Sputtering with wrath, Barr strode toward the screen. Craig let him cover nearly half the distance, then said lazily:

"One moment, Mr. Barr. Don't forget that this is my office and that that is my stenographer. You have no right to interfere with either. Lay finger on that screen or try to molest the girl behind it—or remain in this office three minutes longer—and I swear I'll bring criminal action against you for trespass and for threat to assault me. You'll be an amusing figure in the papers. And in the county jail."

Barr turned, his hand almost on the screen, and snarled back:

"If you think I am afraid of—"

"I *know* you are," intervened Craig. "The Chief of Police here is a friend of mine. So is Judge Shelp. I fancy you'll find trouble getting satisfactory bail in a hurry or special privileges while you're in the police station cells—you needn't take down those last two sentences, Miss Bruce," he called, raising his voice a little.

"Now clear out of here, and clear out in a hurry!" he commanded, in beautifully simulated fury, turning again on Mark. "I've got evidence of threats of violence made against me by you. If you want to keep out of jail, keep away from *me*. If I hear of your making

"I came here to get an explanation, not to give one," answered Barr, threateningly.



Mrs. Barr suffer in any way for the perfectly innocent half-hour's drive I asked her to take with me yesterday, I shall bring the action for threatened assault. You blithering fool! Your wife

is no more interested in me than she is interested in—in *you*. Go!"

And Mark Barr went, his anger still seething, yet wholesomely scared by the warning of prosecution.



To know one's conversation has just been reported in short-hand is enough to jar the complacency of almost any man. But to know that invective and threat, mouthed in the heat of rage, have been set down in black and white for possible use in court—

Mark had at best a very vague idea of his own words during his frequent temper-gusts. The thought of these words being read in open court, printed in the newspapers, his wife's name and his own jealousy figuring in the proceedings—these were too strong a counter-irritant, even for his wrath to overcome. Wherefore, still muttering volcanically but with careful incoherence, he departed.

The door had scarcely closed behind him when Constance emerged, white-faced, shaking, from behind the screen.

"You wonder-man!" she panted. "Oh, how can I ever thank you?"

"By following your precious husband's example," he replied ungraciously, "and drifting away. Honestly, Constance, if you don't object, I'll be glad if you wont add any more complications to my list. I've still got to straighten out the first one. Wont you trot away, please, and *keep* out of the way till this thing is settled? Next time there might not be a screen handy. Don't worry. I'm going to fix things all right."

"You're a brute!" she declared.

"Pulling a woman around by the hair isn't exactly a drawing-room accomplishment," he made answer. "And under some conditions a man who pulls hair might be called a brute—but not if the woman's sinking for the third time and her hair is the only part of her he can grip. That's the situation just now. If hair pulling hurts you, just remember it's a bit of life saving."

AS soon as he had got rid of Constance, he telephoned the police station and asked to speak to the chief.

"Mulroon," he hailed, "this is Craig. Yes—can I bother you to give a message to Fletcher? Tell him I say he's to sit tight and I'll have him out of jail and back on his job by to-morrow morning. Tell him so. No; it isn't a bluff. What do you think I am, to

send such a message, if it was a fake? —What?—No, I don't know how I'm going to do it. That is, I haven't worked it out in full. But if you tell him I'm going to, I've got to. And if I've got to, I can. Besides, the thing is getting clearer every second. I'll have it in shape in a few minutes. The other half of my brain is chewing hard on it."

He laughed somewhat mirthlessly at a reply from Mulroon. Then—

"By the way," he went on, "can you tell me how I can get hold of Monck, that night watchman, in a hurry? Where does he live?"

"He lives down across the tracks," was Mulroon's reply. "But he'll be up here in about five minutes to sign his affidavit. I told him to come back at ten. Why?"

"Because," answered Craig, "I want to see him. I want to see him alone. No, I'm afraid a private room at the station wouldn't do. Could you make him come around here in about half an hour and see me? I'll take it as a big favor, Toby. Yes, I'll explain all about it, later. Thanks, old man. In about half an hour, then—oh, that's all right."

Leaving the 'phone, he summoned the office boy and bade him go for Miss Bruce, a stenographer, with an office in the building, who did work for himself and for two other tenants. While he was waiting for her arrival, he crossed to the screen, unfolded its two surplus panels, and put behind it a chair and a little table.

Miss Bruce came in—a faded, austere damsel with black alpaca sleeves and with a perpetual pucker between her eyes. In one hand she carried a notebook, to which four new-sharpened pencils were strapped by a leather band.

"Double work, this morning, Miss Bruce," cheerily observed Craig, by way of greeting. "Double in quality, not in quantity. So there's double pay in it for you. Got your nerve and your nerves all in good working order? You're apt to need both. Here, Fogarty," —to the office boy,— "I'm going to need you, too. Get the pad and a pencil from the ante-room desk."

Then, to his waiting subordinates,



Craig proceeded to issue Napoleonic orders of battle.

"Miss Bruce," he said, "I'll want you to take down a conversation. If it gets hectic or dime-novelistic, I want you to keep right on with it, without getting flustered."

"I am not in the habit of getting flustered, Mr. Craig," replied the woman, bridding.

"I know, I know. And we're all creatures of habit. Only sometimes a habit gets broken in the place we least expect it to. That's why I warned you. I'll want you to sit behind that screen. I've put a chair and table there. Better go there now, and arrange your note sheets so they won't rattle. And—and for heaven's sake, don't *sneeze*!"

"I'm not in the habit—"

"I know. But it *has* been done. Now then, Fogarty, I want you to go behind the screen, too. Listen to what I say, because there's a whole wonderful unspent five-spot in it for you if you get through with this thing without any hitch. Go behind the screen. Take the pad and pencil with you. Stand close to that left-hand edge of the screen. A man is coming to see me. At an early part of the conversation I'm going to say to him, 'Have a cigar?' Remember that, Fogarty. The cue is: 'Have a cigar?' And when I say that, I want you to drop your pad. Drop it on the floor—with as much noise as you comfortably can."

"But Mr. Craig," expostulated Miss Bruce, "if he does that, won't the man—?"

"Then," pursued Craig, unheeding, "I'll call you to come out—you, Fogarty, not Miss Bruce. She's to sit tight. And out you'll come, pad and pencil in hand, looking as foolish as you know how to; and I'll give you a call-down. You'll slink out to the anteroom without saying a word. Remember, without saying a word. Then chase home and take the rest of the day off. Do you get the idea?"

"I—I—say, boss, is it so he'll think there's nobody left behind there? So he'll think you put me there to keep tabs and that when I've fell down on the job, there won't be any more witnesses?

And he can talk free? Is that the lay-out?"

"Fogarty," approved Craig, "there are moments—rare moments—when there are mental stirrings in that cerebrum of yours. Take your places, please," he went on, "and wait there. I'll act as my own office boy and let in the welcome guest. Now," he added, "if only you two keep sane, I can put it across. The plan's details have been boiling in the back of my head for an hour—ever since the rough idea hit me. At last, I think it's worked out, with any sort of luck. And after the past eighteen hours run of hoodooism, I feel I'm due for just one gentle smile from Mrs. Fortune."

JEREMIAH A. MONCK, night watchman for the branch bank at Blank Terrace, was a large, simple-faced man with generously outstanding ears and a gentle, rugged face—a face that just now bore an ugly bruise on one cheek, from last night's encounter.

"Chief Mulroon said you wanted to see me, Mr. Craig," he began, as he entered Craig's office.

"Yes. Thanks for coming around. I wanted to see you very particularly and in private. That's why I sent my stenographer away. I didn't want him to overhear. Come into my office. Sit down," he continued, leading the way into the inner room and indicating a chair near the screen. "It's good of you to come over so promptly when you must be anxious to get to bed and rest up. Have a cigar?"

Monck jumped to his feet. For directly behind him something had fallen to the floor with a resounding slap. He turned and stared at the screen. Craig also rose to his feet, shouting angrily:

"Come out from there, you bungling ass!"

Fogarty sidled sheepishly around the corner of the screen, clutching the fall-toused pad and pointless pencil.

"Fogarty!" shouted Craig, "nothing but total lack of intelligence keeps you from being half witted. This is the last straw. You're fired. You ought to be a bricklayer, not a stenographer. Get out!"



Craig reached for the desk telephone. "Police station," he directed Central.

Fogarty shuffled to the door, head on breast.

"Leave that anteroom door open behind you," Craig roared after him, "I want to make sure you're gone and not sneaking around out there."

Fogarty groped for his hat in the anteroom and slouched out to a morning of freedom.

"I THOUGHT you said, when I came in, that you'd sent your stenographer away," commented Monck.

"It was a prophecy," returned Craig. "May I suggest, Mr. Monck, that your nerves don't seem to be quite what a bank night watchman's should. When that wall-eyed idiot dropped his pad, you jumped like a scared girl."

"You—you had some one to take down what I said?" rumbled the big man. "If I'd known that—"

"You wouldn't have come," supplemented Craig. "That's why I had him behind the screen. As he's made toad-pie of my pretty arrangements, I don't think I need detain you any longer, Mr. Monck. Good day."

But Monck stood his ground.

"Hold on, Mr. Craig," he said with a hint of belligerence. "Let's get this thing straight. You sent for me and set a trap for me. Why did you do that? I think I've got a right to know."

"For one thing," said Craig, uneasily, "because I wanted to hear your story of last night's happenings."

"I've told all that in my affidavit," snapped Monck. "And you've read it. Chief Mulroon gave it to you to read when you went to see Fletcher. He told me so. You've got the whole story. That wasn't why you sent for me. And I want to know why."

This time the pugnacity in his voice was unmistakable.

"Yes," admitted Craig, "I read the affidavit. If I remember right, the gist of it was this: You were making your rounds of the bank at one-twenty this morning. As you came to the vaults you saw a safe standing open and a man on his knees in front of it. He turned around and attacked you. You recognized him as Mr. Jonas Fletcher. There was a fight and he knocked you out.

When you came to, he was gone and fifteen thousand dollars was gone; and in your hand you were gripping that little gold skull he wears as a watch-charm. Am I right?"

"Yes, except that I didn't know how much money he'd taken till the President got there and—"

"Where did Fletcher hit you?"

Monck pointed to his bruised cheekbone.

"What did he hit you with?"

"His fist, of course—his left. I'd grappled with him, and he got his left arm free and struck. That's all I can remember, till—"

"How often did he hit you?"

"Just that once. But it was enough."

"All this is in your affidavit. How old are you, Mr. Monck?"

"Thirty-six."

"Right in the prime of your strength. And you must weigh close on two hundred, don't you? And all of it bone and muscle. You're a fine-built man, Mr. Monck."

"I'm not looking for soft soap. What I want to know, is why—?"

"And I'm not dealing out soft soap, to-day. I was only going to comment on the fact of your size and strength; and to say it is a queer thing that a fifty-year-old lightweight, like Mr. Fletcher, could have put you out with a single tap—on the cheek, too. I've seen dozens of prize fights. And I never yet heard of a knock-out scored by a blow on the cheek bone. Yet such a blow, from a rather feeble man, rendered *you* senseless. And you stayed unconscious long enough for him to clear out the safe and escape. Fletcher's missed his vocation. He's a White Hope."

"What are you driving at?" demanded Monck, bristling much like an angry mastiff.

"Also," went on Craig, "Mr. Fletcher lost the watch charm two days ago—not last night. Dropped it somewhere in the bank and couldn't find it."

"Look here!" thundered Monck. "I'm an honest man!"

"It needed only that," sighed Craig in relief. "No one but a crook was ever known to say, 'I'm an honest man.'"

"Do you mean to call *me* a crook?"

fiercely demanded Monk, towering menacingly above the seated lawyer.

"Of course," assented Craig, not so much as glancing up at the giant figure, "of course I do. One of the stupidest crooks in all my experience. There, there!" he went on, kindly and still not troubling to raise his eyes toward the murderously distorted face that was so close to his own. "Don't be offended. *One* part of the scheme was really clever—the part involving Fletcher's watch charm. I suppose that gave you the idea for the rest? But, the other details were laughably bad. I don't mean to speak over-critically, but they were. That blow on the cheekbone, for example. No jury would swallow it. If my old friend Toby Mulroon were a normally sensible man instead of a chief of police, he'd have seen through that just as easily as the counsel for the defense would."

"If—"

"It would have been so simple to bruise yourself over the temple or on the jaw, instead; and to say he hit you with an iron bar. You could even have produced the bar he dropped in his flight. Can't you see, my dear fellow, what a perfect case that would have made? As things stand, you'll not only lose that fifteen thousand dollars, but you're due for at least a decade in a Jeffersonianally simple cell."

AND now, a deprecatory smile on his lips, he looked up at Monk. It had been torture not to do so, before; and at each word he had expected to feel the watchman's huge hands at his throat. But now the scowling face bore a trace of irresolution, and the big body was no longer so tense in its menace. Craig breathed easier.

"Well?" he queried, brightly. "How about it?"

Monk did not answer. His hands were clenching and opening, spasmodically. His mouth- corners were working.

"Don't feel too badly over it," counseled Craig. "You're no stupider than a lot of master-crooks. There is a queer twist about the criminal temperament. The cleverest malefactor will lock and double-bar nine of the ten doors to detection. And he'll leave the tenth wide

open with a 'Welcome' sign over it. I don't know why. But it's so. Moreover, a man with as shaky a set of nerves as yours has no place in the Underworld. You'd never win out. But that is irrelevant. The question, now, is: What are we going to do about it?"

"*We?*" croaked Monk, his throat sanded with fright.

"Surely. That's why I sent for you. I wanted some record of your talk, in case you should try later to double-cross me. That's why I posted that bungling stenographer of mine. Are you ready to talk business?"

"Business?" faltered Monk.

"Of course. We can't keep up this merry Society chit-chat all day, you know. Soon or late, we must get down to terms. Fifteen thousand dollars is a tidy sum to have. And ten years in State's Prison is a sad handicap on a happy career. Thanks to your blunders, you won't keep the fifteen thousand dollars and you *will* get the ten years. Unless—"

He paused, fumbled for a match and relighted his cigar.

"Mr. Monk," he asked suddenly, as the other opened his twisting lips to speak, "where have you got that fifteen thousand dollars planted?"

"That's my affair. I—that is—I don't know what you mean. I'm—"

"You're an honest man. Yes—as you were about to say. Well, suppose *I'm* honest, too, in the same way? And suppose I see a way to clear you? And suppose I can fix things so that no one will suspect you and you can keep your hard earned fifteen thousand? What is there in it for me?"

The ferocity was gone from Monk's gnarled face. And suspicion had taken its place.

"I say," repeated Craig, impatiently, "what is there in it for me? How will it be worth my while to help you out? Speak up, man."

"You're talking foolish," hesitated Monk, after a moment's silence. "I told the truth in my affidavit."

"I'm sorry," answered Craig, shrugging his shoulders. "I need money pretty badly just now and it was an easy thousand dollars for me. But perhaps I can clear up as much if I take Fletcher's

offer to act as his counsel. It ought to be worth at least a thousand to him to win free. In the meantime, I'll drop a hint to Mulroon to keep an eye on you; and I'll give him my reasons. It won't do, you know, to have you skip out with all that money, before the trial. In fact, he'd better jail you as a 'material witness.' Good day."

He reached for the desk telephone.

"Police station," he directed Central.

"I—I—what—what guaranty can you give me that you can keep me from getting suspected?" quavered Monck.

Craig hung up the receiver.

"If it comes to that," he asked shrewdly, "what guarantee can you give *me* that I'll get my one thousand dollars from you? How do I know there weren't a gang of you, and that one of your accomplices may not get away with all the money and leave you stranded?"

"No, there isn't anyone else."

"Are you sure you've got the fifteen thousand dollars safe, where you can lay hands on it and give me my thousand?"

"Yes."

"I'm not speaking about any other money you may have salted down," insisted the lawyer. "I'm talking of the fifteen thousand dollars you got last night. Is that where you can lay your hands on it right off, in case I should have to advise you to leave town in a hurry? I ask because you seem to me too stupid to—"

"I've got it safe enough," growled Monck; "don't you worry about that. And never you mind where it is, either. It—"

The outer door slammed open with an impact that threatened to shiver its glass. Monck, pallid, wheeled to face the interruption. Mark Barr burst through the anteroom into the inner office. His eyes were bloodshot. He was beside himself

with black rage. He did not seem to notice that Craig was not alone. Before he had crossed the anteroom he began to speak, his voice rising to a bovine bel-low.

"I've found out!" he began. "I've found why you were so anxious to get rid of me, an hour ago. I met Jim Storm as I was passing here just now on my way to the train. I asked him to carry a message to my wife. She wasn't at home, yet, when I left. And he said he'd seen her go into your office this morning."

"Well?" queried Craig.

"Then it was she and not a stenographer behind that screen. She was in here with you and she hid behind the screen when I came in, and you fooled me with that cock-and-bull story about her being a stenographer you'd put there to take down what I said. I—"

Barr paused, transfixed. He saw a corner of the screen move almost imperceptibly, as at the inadvertent touch of an arm or elbow. Then with a yell, he sprang toward the corner.

"She's still there!" he cried, and flung the screen clattering to the floor.

"Yes," reported Craig in a telephone talk to Constance Barr an hour later, "he apologized—actually apologized. Very handsomely, too—for *him*. Says he's a jealous cur ever to have doubted you and never will again. Which he is and which he will— Oh, Monck? Yes, he's in jail, and Fletcher's out. I wish you'd seen Monck's face when the screen fell. He went all to pieces. But, Lord! Wasn't it a gilt-edged miracle of luck that your angel husband didn't happen in, five minutes earlier? Yes, I was right when I said Mrs. Fortune owed me at least one smile. And she's given me a whole mouthful of them."





# Joe Peddler and the Lop-Horned Bull

*A story of a titanic battle in the wilds, by Charles G. D. Roberts, who writes of the animals of the North woods with the touch of one who knows.*

By Charles G. D. Roberts

Author of "A Kindred of the Wild," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY NORMAN BORCHARDT

**T**HE harvest moon hung globed and honey-colored over the glassy wilderness lake. In the unclouded radiance the strip of beach, and the sand-spit jutting out from it, were like slabs of pure ivory, between the mirroring steel-blue of the water and the brocaded dark of the richly-foliaged shore.

Behind a screen of this rich foliage—great drooping leaves of water-ash and maple—sat a man, with his back against a tree, almost indistinguishable in the confusion of velvety shadows. His

rifle leaning against the tree-trunk beside him, a long trumpet-roll of birch-bark in his hands, he peered forth through the leaves upon the shining stillness, while his ears listened so intently that every now and then they would seem to catch the whisper of his own blood rushing through his veins. But from the moonlit wilds came not a sound except, from time to time, that vast, faint, whispering sigh, inaudible to all but the finest ears, in which the ancient forest seems to breathe forth its content when there is no wind to jar its dreams.

## JOE PEDDLER AND THE LOP-HORNED BULL 921

Joe Peddler had settled himself in a comfortable position in his hiding-place in order that he might not have to move. He was out to call moose; and he knew the need of stillness. He knew how far and how inexplicably the news of an intruder would travel through the wild; but he knew, also, how quickly the wild forgets that news, if only the intruder has craft enough to efface himself. If only he keeps quite still for a time, the vigilant life of the wild seems to conclude that he is dead, and goes once more about its furtive business.

Presently, Joe Peddler reached out for his rifle and laid it across his knees. Then he raised the trumpet of birch-bark to his lips, and uttered through it the strange, hoarse cry of the cow-moose calling to her mate. It was a harsh note and discordant, a sort of long-drawn, bleating bellow; yet there was a magic in its uncouth appeal which made it seem the one appropriate voice of those rude but moon-enchanted wilds.

Joe Peddler was such an expert with the birch-bark horn that his performance with it could deceive not only the bull impetuous for the tryst, but also the wary and jealous cow, or a cow-stalking bear, or, at times, even an experienced and discriminating fellow-woodsman. He would call twice or thrice, and stop and listen for several minutes, confident that on such a glamorous night as this, at the height of the mating season, he would not have long to wait for a response to his lying appeal.

And he had not. When the bull moose comes to the call of the cow, he comes sometimes noisily and challengingly, with a crashing of underbrush and a defiant thrashing of his great antlers upon branch and tree as he pounds through them. At other times he comes as softly as the flight of an owl.

Peddler looked out upon the empty whiteness of the beach. He dropped his eyes for a second to the velvet shadows beside him, where a wood-mouse, blundering almost upon his outstretched leg, had fled with a tiny squeak of terror. When he looked out again, there in the center of the beach, black and huge against the pallid radiance, towered a moose-bull, with his great, over-hanging

muzzle uplifted as he peered about him in search of the utterer of that alluring call.

The great bull had a noble pair of antlers, a head for any hunter to be proud of; but Joe Peddler never raised his rifle. Instead of rejoicing at this response to his deceitful lure, a frown of impatience crossed his face. The strict New Brunswick game laws allowed but one bull in a season to fall to the rifle of any one hunter. Joe Peddler was in search of one particular bull. He had no use for the great beast towering so arrogantly before him, and nothing was further from his thoughts than to put a bullet into that wide-antlered head.

The bull was plainly puzzled at finding no cow upon the beach to greet him, after all those love-lorn calls. Presently he grew angry, perhaps thinking that a rival had reached the scene ahead of him and marched off with the prize. He fell to pawing the sand with one great, clacking hoof, grunting and snorting so loudly that any rival within half a mile of the spot would have heard him and hastened to accept the challenge. Then he strode up to the nearest bush and began thrashing at it viciously with his antlers.

The disappointed animal now had his back toward the thicket wherein Peddler lay hidden. Yielding to his humor, the woodsman once more lifted the birch-bark tube to his lips, with a sly grin, and gave another call—a call that was little more than a murmur of persuasion and caress.

He was hardly prepared for the effect. The bull wheeled like a flash, and instantly, with not a half-second's hesitation, came charging upon the thicket at full run.

Peddler was in doubt whether the charge was one of love or of rage. Did the great beast think to catch his elusive fair before she could again slip away? Or, having detected a false note in that last call, was he bent on vengeance for the deceit? In either case the situation was an awkward one, and Peddler cursed himself for a blundering idiot. He sprang noiselessly to his feet, and raised his rifle. But first, knowing how incalculable are the moods of the moose in



rutting season, he would try an experiment, in the hope of saving the infatuated beast from his bullet.

"You git out o' that," he ordered, very sharply and clearly. "*Git*, I tell ye!"

The bull stopped so abruptly that his hooves plowed up the sand. Decidedly, there was something very strange about that thicket. First it gave forth the love-call of his mate. Then it spoke to him with the voice of a man. And, for all the fire in his veins, there was something in that voice that chilled him. While one might, perhaps, count ten, he stood there motionless, staring at the inexplicable mass of foliage. The arrogant light in his eyes flickered down into fear. And then, his heart crumbling with panic, he leapt aside suddenly with a mighty spring, and went crashing off through the woods as if all the fiends were clawing at his tail.

Peddler chuckled, stretched himself, and settled down to try his luck again. For another couple of hours he kept it up patiently, calling at intervals, and throwing his utmost art into the modulations of the raucous tube. But never a reply could he charm forth from the moonlit solitudes. At last he grew intolerably sleepy.

"Guess Old Lop-Horn must be off courtin' on some other beat to-night," he muttered, getting to his feet with a mighty yawn. "It's me fer me bunk!" And with the rifle under one arm, the birch-bark tube under the other, he strode off down the shining beach to the alder-fringed inlet where his canoe was hidden.

As he paddled swiftly through the moonlight down toward the lower end of the lake, where he had his camp on a high, dry knoll beside the outlet, Peddler mused upon the object of his quest. It was no ordinary moose, however noble of antler, that had brought him out here to the remote and all but unknown tangle of lakes and swamps which formed the source of the North Fork of the Ottanonsis. This bull, according to the stories of two Indian trappers, was of a size quite unprecedented in the annals of the modern moose; and Peddler, who had seen its mighty hoof-prints in the mud beside the outlet, was quite ready to

credit the tale. They were like the tracks of a prehistoric monster.

But it was not for the stature of him that Peddler was hunting the giant bull. According to the story of the Indians, the beast's antlers were like those of no other bull-moose ever seen. The right antler was colossal in its reach and spread—a foot or more, at least, beyond the record, but quite normal in its shape. The left, on the contrary, was not only dwarfed to less than half the normal size, but was so fantastically deformed as to grow downwards instead of upwards. Of a head such as this, Joe Peddler was determined to possess himself, before some invading sportsman from England or "The States" should forestall him.

Arriving at the outlet of the lake, he pulled up the canoe at a natural grassy landing-place below his camp, and pushed his way some hundred yards or so along ashore through the bushes to a spring which he had discovered that morning. Your woodsman will go far out of his way to drink at a cold spring, having a distaste for the rather vapid water of the lakes and streams. He threw himself flat upon the stony brink, and reached down his thirsty lips.

But just as he swallowed the first delicious gulp of coolness, there came a sudden huge crashing in the brushwood behind him. In one breath, he was on his feet. In the next, he had cleared the pool in a leap, and was fleeing madly for the nearest tree, with a moose that looked as big as an elephant at his heels.

The nearest tree, a young birch, was not as big as he could have wished, but he was not taking time just then to pick and choose. He whirled himself round the trunk, sprang to the first branch, swung up, and scrambled desperately to gain a safe height. He gained it, but literally by no more than a hair's-breadth. As the black monster reached the tree it checked itself abruptly, and in almost the same instant lifted its right fore hoof high above its head, and struck like a flash at Peddler's foot, just disappearing over a branch. It missed the foot itself; but it shaved the stout cow-hide larrigan that covered the foot, slicing it as if with a knife. Peddler drew



Just as he swallowed the first delicious gulp of coolness, there came a sudden huge crashing in the brushwood behind him.

himself further up, and then looked down upon his assailant with interest.

"I guess I've found ye, all right, Old Lop-Horn," he drawled; and spat downward, not scornfully but contemplatively, as if in recognition, upon that strangely stunted and deformed left antler. "But, Gee! Them Injuns never said nothin' about yeh bein' so black, an' so almighty spry. I wisht, now, ye'd kindly let me go back to the canoe an' git me gun!"

But any such quixotic courtesy seemed far from the giant's intention. As soon as he realized that his foe was beyond the reach of striking hoof or thrusting antler, he set himself, in the pride of his strength and weight, to the task of pushing the tree over. Treating it as if it were a mere sapling, he reared himself against it, straddling it with his fore-legs, and thrust at it furiously in the effort to ride it down. As the slim young trunk shook and swayed beneath the passion of the onslaught, Peddler clung to his perch with both arms and devoutly wished that he had had time to choose a sturdier refuge.

For perhaps five minutes the giant pushed and battered furiously against the tree, grunting like a locomotive and tearing up the earth in furrows with his hinder hooves. At length, however, he seemed to conclude that this particular tree was too strong for him. He backed off a few yards and stood glaring up at Peddler among the branches, snorting contemptuously, and shaking his grotesquely misshapen antlers as if daring his antagonist to come down. Peddler understood the challenge just as clearly as if it had been expressed in plainest King's English.

"Oh, yes," said he, grimly, "I'll come down all right, bimeby. An' you aint a-goin' to like it one leetle bit when I do, now mind I'm tellin' ye!"

For perhaps a half hour the giant bull continued to rave and grunt and paw about the tree, with a tireless vindictiveness which filled his patient prisoner with admiration and hardened him inexorably in his resolve to possess himself of that unparalleled pair of antlers. At last, however, the furious beast stopped short and stood motionless, listening intently. Peddler wondered what

he was listening to. But presently his own ears also caught it—the faint and far-off call of a cow-moose, from the upper end of the lake. Forgetting his rage against Peddler, the bull wheeled about with the agility of a cat and went crashing off up the lake shore as fast as he could run, apparently fearing lest some rival should get ahead of him. Stiff and chilled,—for the air of that crisp October night had a searching bite in it,—Peddler climbed down from his perch. First, being tenacious of purpose, he hurried to the spring and finished his interrupted drink. Then, returning to the canoe, he stood for a few moments in hesitation. Should he follow up the trail at once in the hope of arriving in time to interrupt his adversary's courtship? But it was already near morning, and he was both dead-tired and famished. He believed that the bull, not being in any alarm, would not journey far that night after meeting his inamorata, but rather would seek some deep thicket for a few hours' sleep. He picked up the rifle and strode off to his camp, resolved to fortify himself well for a long trail on the morrow.

## II

WISE though Peddler was in the ways of the wild folk, he found himself at fault in regard to this particular bull, whose habits seemed to be no less unique than his stature and his antlers. Taking up the trail soon after sunrise, Joe came in due time to the spot, near the head of the lake, where the bull had joined the calling cow. From this point, the trail of the pair had struck straight back from the lake towards the range of low hills which formed the watershed between the eastern and the southwestward flowing streams. About noon, Peddler came to the place where the cow, wearied out by so strenuous a pace, had lain down to sleep in a thicket. The bull, however, driven by his vehement spirit, had gone on without a pause.

All day, Peddler followed doggedly upon that unwavering trail. He crossed the ridge, descended to the broken and

desolate eastern levels, and came, toward sunset, upon another wide and tranquil lake. Feeling sure that his quarry, unaware of the pursuit, would linger somewhere about this pleasant neighborhood in the hope of meeting another cow after moonrise, Peddler found himself a mossy nest in the cup-shaped top of a boulder and settled down for a couple of hours' sleep. He little guessed that the bull, having doubled back on a parallel with his own trail, had been following him stealthily for a good half hour, not raging now, but consumed with curiosity.

Just as the moon was rising over the low black sky-line, jagged with fir-tops, Peddler woke up. Creeping through the bushes, he betook himself to a hiding-place which his quick eye had already marked down, close to the beach—a roomy, flat ledge at the foot of a rock, with a screen of young spruce before it. From behind another clump of spruce, not fifty paces distant, the lop-horned bull, standing moveless as a dead tree, watched him with an intense and inquiring interest. His fury of the preceding night, and even the memory of it, seemed to have been blotted from his mind.

But when, a few minutes later, from that shadowy covert where he could just make out the crouching form of the man, the luring call of a cow breathed forth upon the stillness, the great bull's eyes and nostrils opened wide in amazement. What could a moose-cow be thinking about, to remain so near the dangerous neighborhood of a man? But no, his eyes assured him that there was no cow in the man's hiding-place. Where, then, could she be? He stared around anxiously. She was nowhere in sight. He sniffed the windless night air. It bore no savor of her. He waved forward his great, sensitive ears to listen. And again came that alluring call, the voice, undoubtedly, of the moose-cow appealing to her mate.

There could be no question about it this time. It came from the thicket. Had there been any least note of fear in that call, the giant bull would have rushed at once to the rescue of the unseen fair, concluding that the man had her hidden.

If there had been any hint of satisfaction or of coquetry in the voice, he would have charged in a fury at once, regarding the man as a rival. But no, the utterance was simply that of an untroubled cow, lonely, desirous, expectant. Therefore, for the moment, the great bull was chiefly puzzled. Keeping within the shadows, and moving as imperceptibly as if he were himself but one of the blackest of them, he stole nearer, and nearer yet, till he could plainly see every detail within the man's hiding-place. There was assuredly nothing there but rock, and moss, and bush, and the crouching figure of the man himself, staring forth upon the moonlit beach and holding a curious roll of bark to his mouth. Nevertheless, in that same moment, there came again the hoarse cry of the cow.

It came, indisputably, from that crouching form of a man, from that roll of bark at the man's mouth.

This was a mystery, and the wiry black hair along the neck and shoulders of the bull began to rise ominously. A slow, wondering rage awoke in his heart. It was that element of wonder, alone, which for the moment restrained him from rushing forward and trampling the mysterious cheat beneath his hooves. A red spark kindled in his eyes.

All undreaming of the dread watcher so close behind him, Peddler set his lips to the lying tube of bark and gave his call again and yet again, with all the persuasiveness of his backwoods art. He felt sure that his efforts were convincing. They were, indeed, all of that. They were so consummate a rendering of the cow-moose's voice that they perfectly convinced a huge and hungry bear, which was at that moment creeping up, from the other side of the rock, upon the unsuspecting hunter's hiding-place.

The bear knew that its only chance of capturing so swift and nimble a quarry as the moose-cow lay in stealing upon her like a cat and taking her by surprise in one instantaneous rush. He never doubted for a moment that the cow was there behind the rock. When he was within a dozen feet of those persuasive sounds, his crouched form sud-

denly rose up, elongated itself like a dark and terrible jack-in-the-box, and launched itself with a swish through the encircling branches.

Before Peddler's wits had time to fully take in what was happening, his trained instinct told him what to do. Half rising to his feet as he snatched up his rifle, he swung about, and fired from the hip at the vague but monstrous shape which hung for an instant above him. The shot went wide, for just as his finger pressed the trigger, a great black paw smote the weapon from his grasp and hurled it off among the bushes.

With a contortion that nearly dislocated his neck, Peddler hurled himself frantically backwards and aside, and so just escaped the pile-driver descent of the other paw.

He escaped it, for the instant; but in the effort he fell headlong, and jammed himself in a crevice of the rock so awkwardly that he could not at once extricate himself. He drew up his legs with an involuntary shudder, and held his breath, expecting to feel the merciless claws rake the flesh from his thighs.

But nothing touched him; and the next moment there broke out an astounding uproar behind him, a very pandemonium of roars and windy grüntings, while the crashing of the bushes was as if the forest were being subdued beneath a steam-roller. Consumed with amazement, he wrenched himself from the crevice, and glanced round. The sight that met his eyes made him clamber hastily to the top of the rock, whence he might look down from a more or less safe distance upon a duel of giants such as he had never dared hope to witness.

When the bear found that it was no cow-moose, but a man, that he was springing upon, he was so taken aback that, for a second or two, he forbore to follow up his advantage. To those two seconds of hesitation Joe Peddler owed his escape.

Before the massive brute, now boiling with rage at having been so deceived, had sufficiently made up his mind to fall upon that prostrate figure in the crevice, something that seemed to him like a tornado of hooves and antlers burst out of the bushes and fell upon him.

The next moment, with a long red gash halfway down his flank, he was fighting for his life.

The gigantic moose had been just upon the verge of rushing in to silence those incomprehensible and deceiving calls, when the towering form of the bear burst upon his vision. Here, at last, was something to focus his wrath. Already angry, but still dampened by bewilderment, his anger now exploded into a very madness of rage. There was the ancient, inherited feud between his tribe and all bears. As a youngster, he had more than once escaped as by a miracle from the neck-breaking paw of a bear—had more than once seen a young cow struck down and ripped to pieces. Now to this deep-seated hate was added another incentive. His mind confused by the mating fever and the fury to protect his mate, he dimly felt that the mystery which had been tormenting him was the fault of this particular bear. The man was forgotten. A cow had been calling to him. She had disappeared. Here was the bear. The bear had probably done away with the cow. The cow should be terribly avenged.

The bear—which was one of the biggest and fiercest of his kind in all the northern counties—had fought moose, both bulls and cows, before. But he had never before faced such an antagonist as this one; and that first slashing blow from the bull's knife-edged fore-hoof had somewhat flurried him. Sitting back poised, with his immense hind-quarters gathered under him and his fore-paws uplifted, he parried the smashing strokes of his assailant with the lightning dexterity of a trained boxer. His strength of shoulder and fore-arm was so enormous that if he could have got a stroke in flat, at right angles to the bone, he would have shattered the bull's leg to splinters. But his parrying blows struck glancingly, and did no more than rip the hair and hide.

After a few minutes of whirlwind effort to batter down that impregnable guard, the bull jumped back, as nimbly, for all his bulk, as a young doe startled from her drinking. His usual method of attack, except when fighting a rival bull, was to depend upon his battering fore-



The bear had fought moose before. But he had never before faced such an antagonist as this one.



hooves. But now he changed his tactics. Lowering his head so that his vast right antler stood out before him like a rank of bayonets, he launched himself full upon his adversary.

With all his weight and strength behind it, that charge was practically irresistible, if fairly faced. But the bear was too wise to face it fairly. He swung aside, clutched the lowered antler, and held fast, striving to pull his enemy down.

But the bull's strength and impetus were too great; and the bear was himself thrown off his balance. Even then, however, he might probably have recovered himself, and once more established the battle upon even terms. But he had not reckoned—he could not have been expected to reckon—upon the unprecedented weapon of that little, down-drooping left antler. Not for nothing was the giant bull lop-horned. The dwarfed and distorted antler hung down like a plough-share. And the bear attempted no defence against it. Keen spiked, it caught him in the belly, and ploughed upward. In a paroxysm he fell backwards. The bull, swinging his hind-quarters around without yielding his advantage for a second, lunged forward with all his force—and the deadly

little plough was driven home to the bear's heart.

Peddler, from his post on top of the rock, shouted and applauded in wild excitement, and showered encomiums, no less profane than heartfelt, upon the victorious bull. For a minute or two the bull paid no attention, being engrossed in goring and trampling his victim in an effort to make it look less like a bear than an ensanguined floor-rug. At last, as if quite satisfied with his triumph, he lifted his gory head and eyed that voluble figure on top of the rock. It looked harmless.

"Gee, but ye kin fight!" said Peddler, glowing with admiration. "An ye've saved my scalp for me this night, for sartain. Guess I'll have to let ye keep them lop-sided horns o' yours, after all! 'Twouldn't be quite fair fer me to take a shot at you."

The bull snorted at him scornfully, and turned his head to take another prod at the unresponsive remnants of his foe. Then, paying no further heed to the man on the rock, and craving assuagement to the fiery smart of his wounds, he strode down into the lake and swam straight out, in the glitter of the moon-path, toward the black line of the further shore.

## If You Like Animal Stories

don't miss

"BETCHER BOOTS," by Jack Hines

Author of "Juno of Irish Hill," "Cigar and Cigarette," etc.

"Betcher Boots" is the story of a "husky" puppy and his adventures in the gold rush. An Indian boy, called "Betcher Boots," comes into the story and gives it the title and a "punch."

THE STORY IS IN THE NEXT—THE APRIL—RED BOOK  
MAGAZINE, ON THE NEWS-STANDS MARCH 23RD.



## A Résumé of the Previous Chapters of The New Hughes Novel, "EMPTY POCKETS"

**R**UPERT HUGHES here dares the telling of a great human story just as it would come to us in life. He tells first of a tragedy and its incidents—much in the way it would startle us in our morning paper—and then he unravels the events which led up to it.

In "Empty Pockets," Merry Perry Merithew, a well-born, profligate millionaire of New York, is found dead on the roof of a lowly East Side tenement, grasping in his stained hands eight long strands of copper-colored hair. Immediately search is started for the woman whose hair would match those incriminating strands. Hallard, a reporter who knows Merry Perry's record, makes straight for Aphra Shaler, a little pig who brought herself to the New York market, and who has been a recipient of Perry's princely support. He finds her fleeing, her copper hair bleached to ash. She flings behind her the retort, "Look up Muriel Schuyler. He liked her, and she has copper-colored wool."

And with that begins the story of the effect of the dead roué's life on the foul and the fair, the rich and the poor, during the year before its tragic end.

**M**URIEL SCHUYLER, a beautiful, unspoiled young aristocrat, met Merry Perry in her father's office, where she went to ask for five thousand dollars with which to ransom a kidnaped Italian child. Merry Perry was there to borrow to pay a blackmailer. Muriel's father refused both. Muriel was heartbroken, and when Merry Perry called her up later and told her he would give her that five thousand, if she would meet him at the yacht club and give him one dance, Muriel accepted. She was seen receiving the money by "Pet" Bettany, a gossip-loving dangler on the edge of society. Unconscious of danger, Muriel proceeded toward ransoming the child, with the help of a poor young physician, Dr. Clinton Worthing.

Dr. Worthing had made a real impression on Muriel by coming into her life when her automobile hit a crippled newsboy, Happy Hanigan. A mob at-

tacked Muriel, and her head had been gashed. Dr. Worthing dressed Muriel's wound and prepared his heart to fulfill her commands. Her first was to get the best surgeon to straighten poor Happy's twisted body. Her second, to aid her in keeping a poor Jewish girl from being deported to certain death in Russia. And the third, to help get back to his mother the kidnaped boy.

Muriel also helped Maryla Sokalska, a beautiful—and copper haired—Polish girl, by obtaining for her a position as model at a fashionable dressmaker's. There Merry Perry saw Maryla—and Muriel's well-meant charity ended in Merry Perry's placing the ignorant Maryla on his bounty roll.

Muriel went with the ransom money to the tenement home of the boy's parents. Red Ida, a pickpocket and singer, and her husband "Shang" Ganley, a gunman, recognized Muriel from newspaper pictures, and immediately Ganley schemed to kidnap Muriel for a big ransom. Muriel was lured to a deserted building where she was gagged, bound and held prisoner by Ganley and his pals.

Meantime, Red Ida went up town to sing at a restaurant, and Dr. Worthing hunted vainly for Muriel. Red Ida, afraid of consequences, got a chance to dance with Perry Merithew, when she saw him in the restaurant, and told him of Muriel's abduction and

where in the suburbs she was to be taken that night. Merithew immediately picked up a detective and motored thither.

At midnight Dr. Worthing was tired out with the fruitless search in the shums. He tried to hire a taxi waiting in a dark street, when two men brought out a woman and placed her in the car. Worthing caught sight of her eyes and recognized Muriel. He tried to save her but was knocked off the taxi running-board and had to try rescue by following in another taxi. In a wild race across the city Worthing managed to get the police notified and give a general alarm, but the fleeing taxi eluded them all, gained its lonely suburban destination—and ran squarely into the waiting Merithew and his detective. Muriel was taken from her captors and the gun-men held up.



"Pet" Bettany



Muriel's father

# EMPTY

A REAL NOVEL

By Rupert Hughes

Who Wrote "What Will People Say?"

## CHAPTER XXV

**N**OTHING surprises or upsets a man so much, or finds him so unready, as a full answer to a prayer or the complete success of a scheme. Those who have petitioned for rain and got it, have never yet had their umbrellas with them, nor their galoshes on.

Little Mrs. "Red Ida" Ganley, in an emulsion of remorse and revenge had told Perry Merithew that her husband and his pack had kidnaped Muriel Schuyler and were holding her prisoner in darkest Allen Street till they could transfer her to the far region beyond Spuyten Duyvil Creek.

Merry Perry had made a knightly sortie in his unwarlike limousine. He had gathered up a hotel detective in evening clothes, and all the loose revolvers in the Plaza Hotel. They had rolled north swiftly and beaten the gangsters to their hiding place. All the way Perry had been praying and planning—but praying apparently without faith, since his triumph astounded him utterly. Evidently prayers are granted also to skepticism.

In any case, there stood Perry with Muriel Schuyler comfortably a-swoon and draped safely across his arm; and there stood three of the four gangsters with their hands aloft in front of his pistol and the pistols of his chauffeur and the house detective.

What Dr. Worthing and his taxi-driver, and Winthrop Nicolls and his ninety-horse-power racer, and all the police force of New York had failed to accomplish after a ferocious man-

hunt through the city, Perry Merithew had jauntily achieved without half trying.

Now that his problem was solved, it opened up a new problem—as always happens.

To turn the criminals over to the authorities was plainly his civic duty. But that meant to turn Muriel over to the higher authorities of the newspapers. She had suffered enough from the gunmen, without being thrown into the power of the penmen.

Perry was so befuddled with the problem that the neglected Muriel, despairing of being resuscitated by the proper attentions, came back to consciousness unaided. In the gloom of the lonely road she felt at first that she was sitting up in her own bed after a nightmare. The searing glare of the headlights confused her further. Then she descried the gunmen with their palms uplifted in priestly attitude. She remembered the long Brocken-ride she had made through midnight New York. She felt the raw pain of her abraded lips, the ache of her jaws from the gag. She winced again at the bitter fact that it was Perry Merithew and not Dr. Worthing who had saved her. She could not understand it at all.

Perry thought that Muriel, having been the innocent victim of criminals, should not be subjected to worse punishment at the hands of justice. He had very decent traits, had Perry; and he was in one of his most admirable moods.

He asked the house-detective to guard the prisoners, while he conferred with Miss Schuyler. He led Muriel a few paces aloof from the immobilized gang.

# POCKETS

OF NEW YORK

Illustrated by  
James Montgomery Flagg



Muriel Schuyler

She began at once a belated speech of gratitude:

"It's perfectly glorious of you to have saved me. I don't know how I can find words to tell you how grateful I am."

"Don't try," said Perry. "It isn't worth the trouble. It is reward enough to have been of any service to you, Miss Schuyler. But I'm in great distress. I don't know what to do next."

She had got her thanks off her chest, and she felt better. She said curtly: "The next thing is to get me home somehow, isn't it? I'm pretty tired, you know."

"You must be, you poor child; but what am I to do with these three little gunmen?"

"You'd better keep them out of my reach or there won't be enough left of 'em to turn over to the police."

"That would be the best way out of it, if you could destroy them entirely, because the police include the reporters, and the headlines, interviews, portraits on the front page."

Muriel had been brought up in an honest press-fearing family. She had seen what the newspapers had done to certain of her acquaintances who had stumbled into the calcium light.

"Oh Lord!" she groaned. "That'll be worse than being gagged in the dark. I don't see what I've done to deserve all this, except to disobey my father. It pays me up for going slumming against his orders. I'm glad he and Mother are on the yacht and won't know about it." She fumed a moment, then lifted her head bravely: "All right. I've got to be a headliner and I've got to stand it."

"It's not only that," said Perry in mis-

erable confusion before such a nice girl in such a nasty tangle, "but you see—I hardly know how to explain it—you see, I'm a married man."

"I know that. I know your wife. She's charming," said Muriel. Perry cleared his throat uncomfortably:

"Yes, thanks. But it seems that—it seems that—er—married men must not rescue nice young girls. That privilege belongs to nice young bachelors."

Muriel could have limited this further to nice young doctors, and her heart was full of wild sighs of "Oh, why couldn't it have been Dr. Worthing!" Still, she must not begrudge Mr. Merithew his glory:

"I don't see why anybody should object to your rescuing me. I met you in my father's office. You were most kind about giving me that money. Your motives have all been as noble as can be."

"I'm afraid that the reporters and the gossips are not in the habit of imputing noble motives to me," Perry sighed, and felt in his flippant heart something of the vast regret of a fallen woman for lost innocence, and the still keener regret for lost reputation. While he smiled bitterly at catching himself in an ingenuous mood, Muriel was asking:

"But how on earth did you happen to be here? How did you know they would be taking me along this awful road?"

"That's another complication," said Perry, thinking of the cabaret, the betrayed and neglected Maryla, and of the dance with the gunman's wife. These things were hard to explain agreeably. He made the best of it:

"Well, you see, I—I was having supper to-night at a—at a restaurant where

they happened to have an awful cabaret, and—and one of the singers—and dancers—er—picked me out and—asked me if I knew you—and—”

“That was rather astonishing, wasn’t it?”

“Very, but they do such astonishing things, those cabareters, and I—”

“Had you met her before?”

“Never. She just—just asked me.”

“That was funny.”

“Wasn’t it! But anyway, she told me that her husband and his friends had nabbed you and were going to hold you for a big ransom in a place up here near where cabbages grew on a wall. She made me swear not to tell on her, and so I—I—well, I swore, of course, and dashed out and got the detective and—well, here we are.”

“It’s wonderful of you,” said Muriel. “I should think you would want everybody in the world to know of your heroism. I’m sure if I saved anybody, I’d—I’d advertise it myself if I couldn’t get it published any other way.”

“Thanks, that’s very nice of you. But you see, me being a married man and all—and the young woman being married to one of the gunmen—and I suppose I ought not to have been at the cabaret—it would make it very awkward for everybody. People would wonder about you—how it should be me of all men who should know you were kidnaped and where you were and all that. You see it’s really pretty well muddled up.”

“I see,” Muriel murmured. Perry went on:

“It wouldn’t be very nice for you, or Mrs. Merithew or for me. Of course, I don’t matter. I haven’t any reputation to lose. But that’s what makes me the very worst person to be mixed up in it. I ought to have sent somebody else, but the time was so short and I was rattled and—you understand, don’t you?”

**M**URIEL understood darkly, vaguely. She was as good as a girl could be, but she was neither blind nor deaf, and young girls know more than they are politely supposed to know, and they overhear more gossip than they are expected to understand. She knew well what a menace gossip is, and how like a creeping

acid it discolors and gnaws at whatever it reaches.

She remembered her father’s dislike for Perry Merithew and the general tone people took when they spoke of him. She understood that there must be guilt back of his confusion, and she tried to imagine the sort of guilt it was. She imagined it wrong, of course.

In fact, she assumed that the gunman’s wife was Perry’s sweetheart. She remembered “Red Ida’s” part in her own capture, and she asked suddenly, with startling irrelevance in Perry’s mind:

“Was the—the woman who told you, about me, a little skinny, tough Bowery mucker with red hair and awful clothes?”

To Muriel’s world the much reformed and painfully respectable Bowery was still a name for everything slumish.

Perry gasped: “Yes, she was. Why?”

“Ugh!” said Muriel with a shudder of disgust for her rescuer. So that was the sort of woman this man Merithew went to cabarets with! That was the sort of man he was!

## CHAPTER XXVI

### I

**S**HE retreated from him in a nausea of repugnance. She had danced with him and he had danced with Red Ida! She did not understand the immemorial democracy of vice that has made the sultans bow to the female slaves from the market place or from the kitchen, sent many a tsar to the dusty feet of many a beggar-maid, and brought countless coronets and top hats to grass or carpet before little bare feet, little brogans and little dancing slippers. Snobbery does not cross the boundaries of sex.

But Muriel had this to learn and grow used to. It is one of the bitterest lessons that women meet in life. Perry Merithew was the first example that confronted her, and she loathed him—temporarily. She blamed him for daring to know her; she blamed him for daring to lend her money to do charity with. All he was good for now was to complete her rescue, and vanish. What an abominable fate it was that she had to be

rescued by him! She was instantly as determined to thwart the reporters as Perry was. Suddenly the resolution came to her:

"There's just one thing to do," she said grimly. "Turn the gunmen loose."

"Let them go!" Perry gasped.

"Certainly. They're not of the slightest use to me. And heaven knows, I've had enough of their society. I'm sick of the sight of them. And I'm really horribly sleepy."

Perry glanced at the tableau in the brilliant glow of the four headlights.

The chauffeur Groden, in deep silhouette edged with light, covered the three gangsters with two revolvers. They stood with arms up like jumping jacks. The detective Lumm was "frisking" them scientifically, with deft prods, probes and slaps. He had already piled up in the road a little pyramid of weapons: five revolvers, two knuckle-dusters, two sandbags, three ugly clasp-knives, a black-jack and some boxes of cartridges.

The look on the gunmen's faces was the more desperate for being baffled. Hatred made fiends of them. Perry mumbled:

"It seems hardly right to turn them loose again; they're like mad dogs. Besides, I'm afraid that if I let them go I might be committing some crime or other. It might let me in for a sentence to jail or the penitentiary or something."

"That would hardly do, either," Muriel yawned.

Perry shook his head in amused adoration. He did not believe in logic, arithmetic, consistency, gratitude, or breeches for women. He was used to being used. It rather endeared Muriel to him to find her the spoiled child. But he sighed one of his most effective sighs.

"We might ask Lumm," he said. "He's a detective." He raised his voice and called him. "Oh, Mr. Lumm, would you mind coming here a moment."

"Sure!" said Lumm. He cautioned Groden: "Keep 'em covered, and if one of 'em so much as wiggles his little finger, shoot 'em all down."

This pretty thought seemed to terrify Groden more than the three musketeers. Groden's customary weapon was an automobile, not artillery. While he stood im-

agining himself piling up the dead in front of him, Lumm joined Merithew in the twilight by the limousine.

Perry explained the situation to him, and the desired escape from the newspapers. Lumm dealt largely in the suppression of notoriety, and he understood. Still, he was not inspired, and he rubbed his large chin hard without result. In the midst of his perplexity, Achilles, who had taken Groden's measure, whispered to his fellows:

"I'm gona take a chanst wit dat guy."

He made a sudden leap forward at Groden. Groden was afraid to shoot. He fell back in disorder, tripped on his own feet and sat down hard. Achilles bent to snatch a weapon from the heap on the ground. Lumm, who had been watching with one eye, sent a shot between his very hands.

Achilles did a sort of cart-wheel backward and was instantly lost in the dark, for the two automobiles confronting each other with blazing headlights formed a crater of blinding radiance that made the enveloping gloom impenetrable to the eye. The moon was struggling behind a mob of clouds.

Pep Chu and Blip followed Achilles' example and whisked out of sight with uncanny abruptness.

Lumm started forward in pursuit, but Perry seized his arm:

"Let 'em go."

"What?" Lumm snarled, in a rage of disgust. "Leave 'em put a thing like that over on me?" But Perry clung to his sleeve.

"You do what I tell you to do. They've solved the problem for us."

Lumm remembered that he was not a policeman. He did not love the police, nor they him. He understood. He grinned.

"I'm next," he said. "I got you."

Perry and Lumm laughed at Groden's efforts to explain how he would 'a' let 'em have it on'y for slippin'. There came from the dark shoreland of Spuyten Duyvil Creek a sound of splashing, floundering and cries for help. Achilles had run into the water.

"Go save him," Muriel cried. "He'll drown."

"No such luck, Miss," said Lumm.



Perry glanced at the tableau in the brilliant glow of the four headlights. The chauffeur Groden covered the three gangsters with deft prods, probes and slaps. The look on the gunmen's faces





JAMES MOLLISON. N.Y.C.

with two revolvers. They stood with arms up like jumping jacks. The detective Lumm was "frisking" them scientifically, was the more desperate for being baffled. Hatred made fiends of them.



There was a silence that might mean anything—escape or death.

## II

MURIEL felt a new dread, a kind of guilt, a great fear, an instinct of flight.

"Let's get away! Quick!"

"That's best," said Perry. "Climb in to my car." Lumm and Groden started to gather up the arsenal in the road.

"Throw them into the water," said Perry. They flung them into the dark, and some splashed and some thudded.

Perry helped Muriel into his limousine. Lumm climbed to the front seat with Groden. The car moved forward slowly past the other limousine with its staring headlights.

Groden paused to ask: "What becomes of that car, sir?"

"It's none of ours," said Perry. "Somebody will find it; go on."

"Wait! wait!" Muriel cried. "The money! It may be in there."

Groden ran back, fumbled about in the deserted limousine, found a handbag on the floor, and returned with it.

After Shang and Pep had forced Muriel to surrender her funds, they were unable to agree on the division and afraid of Achilles, and had stuffed the money into Muriel's wrist-sack for Achilles to divide. They had remembered to transfer it from the taxicab to the limousine, but had forgotten it in the terror of their abrupt arrest. Shang Ganley, the first to escape, was the first to remember it as he fled penniless in the dark. Among all his regrets this would hurt him the longest.

Muriel opened the handbag. There lay three thousand-dollar bills. She clutched them with joy and thrust them into Merithew's palm.

"Take them," she said.

"Me. Why? What is it?"

"It's the money you gave me to rescue the Italian boy with. He cost only two thousand. There's your change."

"But—er—is he rescued?"

"I don't know. I hope so. But I've done all I can."

"This money, though—really—it embarrasses me."

"Not half as much as it does me."

He offered it back, but she pushed it aside. She felt that somehow she was absolving herself from her obligations to this awful person.

Perry felt the lack of cordiality, the vague displacency of her manner, and it hurt him. He wanted her good favor increasingly as it proved elusive.

"I'm sorry," he said. "Any time you want it again—"

"I'll never want it again! I've finished with slum work and—" She could hardly say "and you." She hardly dared to think it, it was so hideously ungrateful. Gratitude is one of the most difficult of emotions.

Perry sighed again, and put the money in his waistcoat pocket as if it were dross. Yet after all, three thousand dollars was three thousand dollars. It rendered him indulgent. He would save the insolent little wretch in spite of herself, finish his rescue and have done with her.

"Groden," he called, "don't go back the way we came. We may be asked questions. Isn't there some other way round-about?"

Groden nodded. He knew his greater New York and held north to Van Cortlandt Park South; and then ran southerly along the broad ribbon of Mosholu Parkway; along the rim of Bronx Park, into the Southern Boulevard, into the Boston Road and the upper twists of Third Avenue and across its Harlem River bridgeway; reëntering Manhattan five miles from the point of exit. Muriel hardly spoke during the long journey. She was heartily ashamed of herself, but she could not forgive Fate for landing her at Perry Merithew's mercy, when Dr. Worthing would have been, and tried to be, and ought to have been, her rescuer.

Perry was surprised that he did not, could not, feel more indignant at Muriel's parsimony of appreciation. He tried to call her a worthless, ungrateful monster, but he could not feel angry at her. He felt angry at himself. He strove to find felicitous expressions, but he was as witless as a yokel.

And suddenly he recalled what different company this limousine, this little

rolling *cabinet particulier* had housed. Aphra Shaler was not the first to loll there in his arm. Maryla had found it a spider's parlor. Pet Bettany had invaded it and demanded blackmail. Red Ida had leaned in at the window. And now Muriel Schuyler was there!

She was so different from the others: she did not belong at all. The other women crowded mistily into the narrow room like the ghosts of old sweethearts in the trite illustrations. They ridiculed Perry Merithew in the rôle of squire of demoiselles.

Here was astounding opportunity beyond the management of his dreams. He had desired her, and had not known how to get near her; and now he had saved her and she was in his stateroom! And he could not find a single wile to employ!

He felt untimely rather than unworthy. He regretted those sneering pretty ghosts that rode with him, but it was not the remorse of repentance. It was the more usual anger that we feel when our past turns out a bad investment.

### III

WHAT antipathy is more annoying than that between people who cannot be enthusiastic for the simple reason that they ought to be? Muriel and Perry rode for miles in silence, wasting the night and the solitude that would have been precious to how many separated lovers.

They spun through the sleeping streets of the upper town till they approached the corner where the big Schuyler mansion lifted its imperial façade to the obsequious moon. Then the detective Lumm leaned back and motioned to Perry, who opened the door a little and leaned forward at the crevice to hear Lumm's murmur:

"There's a bunch of min standin' around the entrance to Miss Schuyler's home, sir."

"Reporters!" Perry groaned. "Go on by!" He turned to Muriel. "The death watch is waiting for you."

She was tired and peevish, and she snapped: "Oh, dear!" with more disgust

than the phrase implied. But she did not object.

"Where to now, sir?" Lumm asked.

"God knows," said Perry. He turned to Muriel. "You could hardly go to my house, could you?"

Even Muriel was sophisticated enough to answer:

"Hardly!"

"Or to a hotel?"

"At this hour!"

She was always childishly resentful when she was sleepy. And now she was alone in New York—homeless. Perry had her on his hands indeed. He had fought to gain her, and now he could not be rid of her. His thoughts were blasphemous until Muriel exclaimed:

"There's my Aunt Cornelia—Mrs. Neff—if the house isn't closed up."

Perry knew Mrs. Neff. He seized the speaking tube eagerly and directed Groden where to go.

THE house was dark, ugly, forbidding. But Perry got down and rang the bell insistently, till at length a light was made upstairs.

"Thank heaven, Aunt Cornelia is home," Muriel sighed and hurried from the limousine to the door.

But the caretaker appeared in a singularly matter-of-fact nightgown and protrusive bare feet. Behind him his fat wife looked like a startled bolster. They had supposed that the police had rung the bell to notify them that the house was on fire or full of burglars.

They were hardly relieved to find Perry Merithew and Muriel Schuyler interceding for hospitality like wanderers in a one-house wilderness.

Muriel explained her plight with her most powdered-sugar graciousness, and they dared not turn her away, especially as they were in a chagrin of guilt: they were supposed to be sleeping in the basement, but, secure in the knowledge of Mrs. Neff's absence in Europe, they occupied her room and slept in her campied four poster as snugly as *Christopher Sly* the tinker in the Induction.

Muriel had noted the light in the room she knew to be her aunt's. She was not quite too sleepy to be inspired. She smiled tauntingly:



Perry recalled what different company this limousine had housed. Aphra Shaler was not the first to loll there in his arm. window. And now Muriel Schuyler was there! She was so different from the others: she ghosts of old sweethearts in the trite illustrations. They



JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

Maryla had found it a spider's parlor. Pet Bettany had invaded it and demanded blackmail. Red Ida had leaned in at the door and did not belong at all. The other women crowded mistily into the narrow room like the ridiculous Perry Merithew in the role of squire of demoiselles.

"I'll trade secrets with you, Mrs.—Mrs.—"

"Mrs. Rauch, Miss."

"Oh, yes, Mrs. Rauch. Now, Mrs. Rauch, if you will promise not to tell Mrs. Neff I spent the night here, I'll promise not to tell her that you and your husband use her room."

"*Um Gotteswillen!*" gasped Mrs. Rauch. Muriel went on: "And I won't mention the bottles of beer there on the console in the hall if you promise."

Mrs. Rauch promised hastily, fervently.

Perry Merithew, lagging superfluous on the doorstep, turned away smirking at the galling irony of his situation, but Muriel whistled him back, with a soft "Sst!" as if she were afraid to waken the street. She whispered:

"Hadn't somebody better be told not to look for me any further?"

"Good idea! I'll see to it."

"And Doctor—Doctor—the people who were pursuing us ought to be told."

"The police will send out word."

"Oh, that's nice. Well, good night! and thank you ever so much again—oh, ever so much!"

A competent reward, that! For that he had gone jousting through the city, risking his life gunning for gunmen. He thought of Pet Bettany's suspicions and accusations, and her cynical belief of his relations with Muriel Schuyler.

He realized again that cynics guess wrong as often as illusionists: he had known of so much evil snatched under the shield of innocence, and so much sturdy innocence flourishing in the face of evil appearance and opportunity.

#### IV

PERRY mused on life and yawned in its face, till he was startled awake by a remembrance of the latest errand Miss Schuyler had given him—she was making a positive chore-boy of him! And in the words of the bell-boy's song, "All I get is 'Much obliged to you.'"

His car was passing a drug store whose prescription clerk was just putting out his lights for the night, as drowsily as if he had taken his own drugs. Merithew signaled Groden to stop, ran into the

store, found a pay-as-you-enter telephone in a booth, dropped a nickel in the slot, and called for "3100 Spring."

A policemanly voice growled: "Head-quarters. What is it?"

Merithew asked: "Have you found Miss Schuyler yet?"

"Miss Who?—oh yes—well—er—not exactly—not quite—but we're—we'll have her any minute now."

"Well, she's been found. The gang got scared—left her in a stolen limousine up Spuyten Duyvil way and ran off. She managed to get to the nearest house and—and now she's safe."

"The hellyousay! Where is she now?"

"None of your business."

"Say, who are you, anyway?"

"*Little Nemo*. Good night. Better luck next time."

He hung up the receiver and left the booth, chuckling. The yawning druggist locked the door after him, and walked away.

By the time the police traced the number, there was no one to answer the inspector's fierce call.

Perry went to his home a little consoled by the exquisite privilege of teasing the police. Also his conscience rejoiced. He had done a virtuous act, seized an opportunity that vice had placed in his way.

It was a paradox for his conscience. If he had not taken Maryla from her shop; if he had not danced with Red Ida, he could not have rescued Muriel. He fell asleep thanking God that nobody knew except those of whose silence he was secure.

He forgot Pet Bettany.

#### CHAPTER XXVII

THE city was a great dormitory, sound asleep save for a few corridors where night-industries thrived. It was the darkest hour before the dawn, the silentest hour before the alarm clocks of the humble began their odious cock-a-doodle-doo.

Sleep and idleness were almost everywhere. In the newspaper offices the huge spools of white paper had been swept through the presses and emerged in folded journals carrying in the largest





JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

The sailor held his glimmering lantern close to the platform of the stairway set sidewise like the stoops in Batavia Street. Perhaps it reminded Muriel of that little avenue of her entrance into the realm of empty pockets, for she said: "Watch my poor for me till I come back, wont you?"

type the news that Muriel Schuyler was missing and in the power of a desperate gang. The telegraph wires had spread the same story across the continent and beneath the seas.

**DOCTOR WORTHING** and Winnie Nicolls and Officer Grebe and the other policemen had ceased to ransack the town and its environs. They had hunted frantically and without clue, the swift cart darting hither and yon like a great black hound nosing out a scent. Then they had paused to telephone Headquarters for news and learned that Muriel was safe somewhere.

The swift-footed Achilles, plastered with mud from his tumble into Spuyten Duyvil Creek, was still running as fast as his legs could carry him. Little Big Blip and Pep Chu were speeding north of Yonkers on a Warburton Avenue trolley car.

But Shang Ganley had changed his course and turned back to town. He was lost in the wilderness where he was. His drug supply needed replenishing. And he wanted a word or two with his wife.

His instinct and his suspicion told him that Ida had betrayed him. After cautious reconnaissance, he ran down into a lonely subway station and was carried along that huge rathole under the city walls, down to his own nest. His longing for a signal revenge was overwhelming his discretion.

His load of disappointments would have driven a stoic to frenzy. He had been thwarted in his great and beautiful dream of wealth. He had hardly the carfare to take him home to his gory settlement with Ida. He entered the flat with a heart on fire.

His victim was not there. A cyclone had seemingly passed through the lonely flat. His clothes were scattered. Hers were gone. His suit-case was gone. The very walls shouted: "She's done a lam-mister!"

The disarray was evidence not only of flight but of guilt. Shang fell into a spasm of rage. He cursed Ida with black venom. He threatened her with

every form of destruction. He hated her with all his might. He could not hate her enough to suit him. He was too weak. The drug receptacle in his ring was empty.

He kicked aside a rug and lifted a plank in the floor, disclosing the little warehouse where he had kept the stock of drugs he had begun to sell and ended by consuming. He thrust his shivering hand into the space between the joists. His eyes started. He bent down and stared into the dark. He lighted a match and held it till it burned itself out at his heedless finger tip. Then he fell flat and screeched. He sniveled, puled, bellowed, chewing his tears and jolting out curses and prayers for revenge. She had confiscated all of his cocaine, every last "deck" of it! It was late and it was farther to the nearest illicit drug store than he had strength to go.

If there were lower depths of degradation to plumb, he could not imagine them: frustrated in his crime, robbed, betrayed and abandoned by his wife, bereft of his vice, sick, penniless, despised, wanted by nobody on earth but the police.

**AFTER** Shang had wept himself limp, he climbed to his feet with the aid of a chair and staggered down the steps into the stupid, dirty daybreak of Allen Street.

He met a policeman who had just come for him. A general round-up had been ordered by the Deputy Commissioner. Achilles had been recognized by the policeman whose wrist he broke. The ownership of the taxicab had been instantly traced by its number. All acquaintances of Achilles or Blip were in demand at Headquarters. Shang was so dejected that it seemed good to have even a policeman to lean on. At the station he was charged with nearly everything from overspeeding, via resisting arrest, to mayhem, abduction and assault with intent to kill. Then he was escorted through the door and down a corridor in a human zoo, to a tiny room with a full-length railing in front of it.

*Continued on page 1025 of this issue.*



# Campin' Out

*THAT boy Percy, at whose home God left a baby sister, makes a trip into the wilds.*

By Edwin L. Sabin

ILLUSTRATED BY B. CORY KILVERT



**F**OR his birthday, Hen got a new story-book, which was all about some Boy Scouts who went camping and covered themselves with glory, besides having a good time—either phase being of utmost importance. When Percy had borrowed the book, and had read it, he too pronounced it “swell,”—that *ne plus ultra* of commendation.

There were no organized Boy Scouts in Hen and Percy's immediate circle. That seemed a great pity, but the difficulty appeared not insurmountable, until Spotty supplied additional information.

“Aw, you can't be Boy Scouts without a regular permit,” he claimed. “I know all about 'em.”

“How do you know?”

“Because where I've been visitin' they had Boy Scouts, and they had to get a regular permit from New York, and a man to lead 'em. There's Scout-master and first-class Scouts and second-class Scouts and tenderfoots and uniforms and pledges to sign, and everything. When you're a Boy Scout you got to do a good turn every day.”

“To anybody you meet?” demanded Fatty.

“I guess so.”

“Aw, fiddle!” protested Fatty. “If I meet Patsy Flanagan, do you s'pose I'm goin' to do him a good turn, after he stole my sling-shot?”

“He can lick *you*,” derided Hen, promptly. “He says he can.”

“He can't, neither!” retorted Fatty.

much aroused. “He's a liar. I can lick the stuffin' out of him.”

“We can be Boy Scouts if we want to, all the same,” asserted Percy. “We can be our own kind of scouts, as long as our folks say we can.”

“And cut that good turn business out,” insisted Fatty. “I aint goin' to do no good turn to anybody for nothin', 'specially when he's done me dirt. Tendin' baby whenever I want to have fun is plenty for *me*, you bet. Expect I got to tend her this afternoon, jus' becuz my mother's goin' out.”

“Well, we ought to have a Scout-master, anyhow,” spoke Spotty. “The Scout-master is a man who takes you out hikin' and campin' and shows you how to do things.”

“My father'll take us, maybe,” professed Hen. “I'll ask him.”

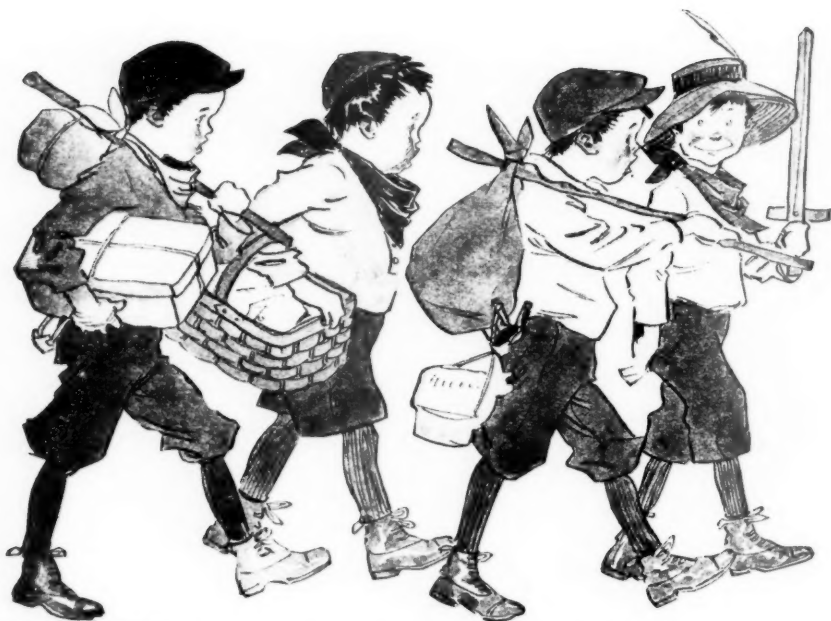
That sounded promising, for Hen's father was a famous hunter and fisher. Wasn't he all the time sending ducks and fish over to Percy's house? And didn't he go off several times a year, camping, and be away for a week or two? Once he had even brought home a deer!

“I'll be a first-class Scout,” proclaimed Spotty, at once.

“What's a first-class Scout?”

“He knows how to tie knots that wont slip, and can revive people who are hurt or killed.”

“Aw, heck! You aren't any first-classer than anybody else. You don't know nothin'.”



—BARRY SILVER D.

Faces were set to the fore; there could be no retreat.

"I do, too. I can tie a knot nobody can slip. And when somebody's drowned you lay him on his back or his belly and work his arms so as to pump the wind into him. I can track, too. Bet you I can track you for a mile, if you gimme half a chance."

"I'm a first-class Scout, if you are," announced Fatty. "You needn't think you're the only one."

"You make me tired," scoffed Spotty. "You bawl when you cut your finger. Don't he, kids?"

"I don't, either," retorted Fatty, hotly. "You'd bawl, too, if you cut your finger clean to the bone."

"I can shoot my father's gun. I can hit a potato a mile off," asserted Hen. "Maybe he'll let me take it, and we can kill things and eat 'em. You needn't think I'm goin' to be any old second-class Scout."

"Aw, what's eatin' on you?" accused the scornful Spot. "You're afraid to shoot his gun. You know you are. You're afraid of its kickin'."

"We'll all be first-class Scouts," proposed Percy, hastily. "And if other kids want to come in, they'll have to be sec-

ond-class, or we wont let 'em join."

"And the babies can be the tender-foots," added Spotty.

But this raised an instant howl from Hen, who was free from that perpetual incumbrance of babies.

"I wont play," he declared, in alarm. "You can't have your old babies around, when you're Scouts. Who wants some old babies in camp? They're always in the way. You got to leave 'em at home." And he added, meanly: "Fat's baby enough, anyhow."

"You shut 'up!" challenged Fat, flustered. "Babies are better than your darned old rabbits! All you got is some old rabbits. Aw, gee! Just rabbits!"

"Maybe I can't go, then," confessed Spot, who had the responsibility of a baby brother and a little sister, both. "I always have to tend baby when I want to have some fun."

Fatty, upon whom devolved the care of a baby brother, and Percy, whose charge, a baby sister, was the youngest of all, likewise looked dubious.

"We can ask and see," said Percy, hopefully. "A kid ought to have *some* kind of a vacation."

"Well, if I tend baby and don't kick, I'll get a bicycle for Christmas," informed Spot. "You needn't think I'm goin' to give that up." And he glared at Hen.

However, as the organization of the Boy Scouts seemed complete (lacking only the support of Hen's father), and as camping seemed to be the goal in view, a camping spot must be decided upon at once. Fatty proposed his back yard, but this was immediately repudiated by Hen.

"Yes, and then you'll be all the time tendin' your babies! What's the good of campin' where there's babies around? We aint got any babies at our house, and I bet you we don't ever have any. Don't want 'em. You can't put your old babies on me!"

Hen's defensive attitude was embarrassing but emphatic.

"We can camp out at the milkman's place, I guess," submitted Percy.

"Whereabouts?"

"Down in his pasture, by the creek. Where you and me went fishing—remember, Fat?" Fat nodded. "It's an

awful wild place—aint it, Fat? We can catch suckers and eat 'em—and we saw a big heron there, too, didn't we, Fat?"

"And if it rains we can go in the barn," supplemented Fat.

"Aw, Boy Scouts don't go in barns, for a rain," scoffed Spotty. "They know how to cover themselves up and stick it out. You're a regular tenderfoot—aint he, kids?"

"Shucks, I aint afraid of gettin' wet," boasted Fat. "I was just talkin'."

The milkman's pasture appeared to be the best prospect. Percy engaged to ask him for the privilege of camping there. The privilege was granted. The milkman even offered to haul tent and supplies, in his milk wagon. All the mothers and fathers also agreed with the plan. No other boys joined, because they objected to being enlisted as only second-class Scouts. As soon as they learned of this restriction, they withdrew their applications with shrill outcry, and affected utmost disclaim of the whole proceeding. However, this made the organization delightfully exclusive.

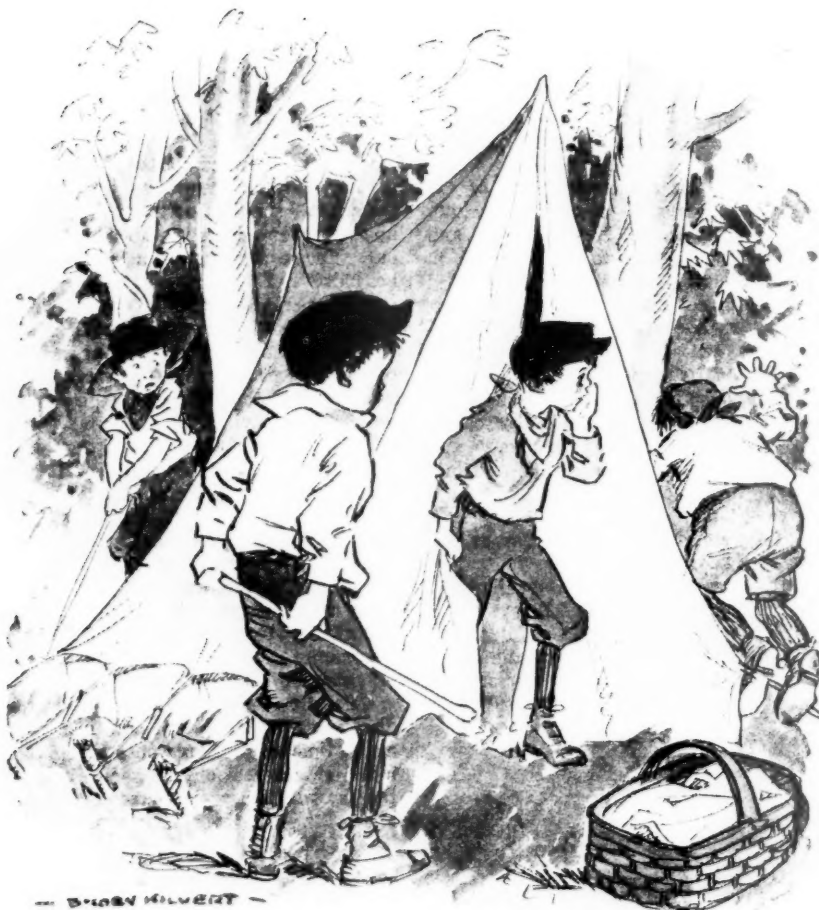
The one fly in the ointment was the discovery that Hen's father couldn't go, at the time set. His reasons, as reported by Hen, seemed obscure. He alleged that he was "busy"—whereas everybody knew that whenever he wanted to go fishing he up and went. He promised that he might come later, but for the present he couldn't possibly leave. He couldn't say exactly when he could leave. "In a day or so" was very vague, it being that indefinite and convenient term employed by one's elders when they wished to stall in an issue. Hen defended his father as best he could; nevertheless he plainly was puzzled and peeved.

"Aw, we'll go anyhow," asserted Spotty. "What do we care for any old Scout-master?"

"I can put up a tent," declared Hen.

"We don't need any," averred Spotty. "We can sleep out in blankets."





Fatty was constantly stumbling over the ropes.

"You couldn't put up any tent," accused Fatty, of Hen.

"I can, too. Didn't I go out with my father, once, and didn't I watch him do it? It's easy as pie!"

"If we can't put it up, he'll come out and show us," reminded Percy, hopefully.

AS there was no use in waiting for the disappointing Scout-master who had accepted the title but for some mysterious reason declined to shoulder the obligations thereof, the Scouts (all first-class ones) set out for camp. Adieus were said. Even amidst the excitement Percy felt a little twinge of tenuous

regret. He was haunted by the last *goo's* of baby sister. Surely 'twas not unmanly to reflect that in the last moment never had she appeared so cute and smart; never had she kicked out so bravely at sight of "Brother," all unconscious, evidently, despite his fond explaining, that he was "going by-by" and she must stay behind, without him, for a whole week. Fat and Spot likewise seemed a bit oppressed by the seriousness of the occasion. But Hen strode bravely on, unweighted by memories. His father and mother had promised to feed his rabbits—a task which required little finesse. Baby sisters and baby brothers demanded more careful attention.

Still, faces were set to the fore; there could be no retreat. Hen had been unable to procure the gun (which his father would bring later); that was disappointment number two. But each Scout had his private lunch, and there were two basketfuls of other stuff, carried turn about. For further needs of the commissary, they must depend upon their sling-shots and fish-poles. The tent and bedding and other heavy accessories had preceded them by grace of the milkman's wagon.

Hen almost hit a woodpecker, on the way out; and Fatty laboriously sneaked up on a mourning-dove in a dead tree—but to the great scorn of his fellows it flew before he killed it. All his protests that he would have got it, sure, if it had waited just a minute, could not reinstate him in Scout favor. Fatty was a failure, as a sneaker on things. That turtle-dove would have been fine eating. Now, whether Fat could cook, as he claimed that he could, remained to be seen.

However, there was no immediate need for cooking. Half the bread and butter and other ready-to-hand provender was eaten on the road; the other half would serve for supper; or—

"We'll catch some fish, and roll 'em in mud, and each fellow can cook his own," proposed Spot. "That's Scout way."

To tell the truth, even with Hen's professional guidance the erection of the tent proved somewhat of a problem. It was put up after a fashion and much wrangling, but it hung limp in places and seemed insecure at the edges. Fatty was constantly stumbling over the ropes and pulling the pins loose. Nevertheless, the camping spot was indeed a fine one, amidst the trees, close to the creek, albeit the darned cows acted in an alarmingly threatening manner at the intrusion. But who was afraid of cows? Nobody.

After the tent was erected, and Fatty had set the example of again sampling the lunch, it was high time to fish. They caught seven suckers—a number incapable of satisfactory division, two being not more than minnows. Against Fatty's poignant vote all were saved for

breakfast. The ready-to-hand provisions certainly were running low at a surprisingly rapid rate.

The dusk gathered, and bed-time had arrived. This was the crowning glory—to lie blanket-wrapped under the canvas, through which the mosquitoes somehow penetrated easily, and in the cosy, eerie shelter to woo slumber. Fatty dropped asleep first, if his loud gurgles were any sign. An exclamation from Spotty, directed at the mosquitoes, proved him to be still awake. Hen attempted to turn over, and brought from Spot a remonstrance.

"What you doin', darn you? You aint givin' me any room!"

"You shut up," retorted Hen. "You don't own this tent. It's my father's tent. Can't a kid turn over? I got a cramp in my leg."

"The mosquitoes are chawin' me to pieces," volunteered Spot. "Let's get up and make a smudge."

"Aw, go to sleep," bade Hen.

Percy lay and listened. In here it was dark as a pocket. Outside was dark, too. The wind soughed; the tent flapped; and the ground was very hard. Home seemed far away, and a long, long time back. What was that funny noise, near the tent? Might be a bear—but there weren't any bears around here, were there? Bears, of course, roamed widely in night-time, and they naturally would be attracted from their coverts to the tent where four boys, one of them fat, were housed defenseless. Oh, shucks! But listen to Fat sleep, will you! He'd be no good, in emergency. If Hen only had brought that gun! And listen to Spot, making a noise slapping mosquitoes! Percy found himself wishing that he were home, with his mother and father close, and his baby sister as a sort of a protection, too. Had baby sister cried for "Brother?" She'd think it awful funny, that no brother was around. Had she grown much? Probably.

What was that noise, again?

"What's that?"

"What?"

"Listen, can't you?"

They all listened, while the slothful Fatty snored, a fair mark for prowling beasts.

"Bet you you're afraid to go and see."

"Bet you I aint."

"Bet you are."

"Bet I aint."

"Why don't you go, then?"

"Aw, you're nearest the door. Go yourself."

"I'm all wrapped up."

"So am I."

A snort, and a wheeze, and a heavy body actually brushing the canvas. Now nobody spoke. The situation was too critical. They listened. Percy yearned to flee the region, at once, to that haven where baby sister was safely reposing all unaware of the danger to faithful, loving "Brother." Was he never to see baby sister again? Was—but listen. Oh, listen!

"Fiddle! That's nothin' but an old cow!" asserted Hen, bravely. "Who's afraid?"

Well, who wouldn't be afraid? And cogitating, listening, Percy suddenly woke up into the blessed security of daylight. The miracle of safe passage through the night in the wilds had been accomplished. Providence had been very good. Nobody spoke of the night's peril; they maintained a discreet silence—particularly as Fatty would not appreciate and had a sharp tongue; and cow tracks certainly were thick, around the tent.

Fatty undertook the task of cooking bacon, and making coffee; and following Spot's wise instructions each fellow was to roll his fish in mud and bake it in the ashes. That promised a rare dish. However, milk for the coffee was a luxury so easily procurable that somebody ought to get it. Percy volunteered to go.

"Watch my fish," he enjoined, as he started to the milkman's house, with the pail.

"I'll go, too," proffered Spot, with alacrity. "Watch my fish, kids."

"Naw," objected Hen. "I'm goin'. I'd as lief go."

"That aint fair!" opposed Fat, flushed and perspiring. "If you're all goin', I'm goin'. Think I'll stay here alone? Some of you have got to help me cook."

"Well, I'll stay," yielded Hen. "But

I'm goin' next time," he warned.

To trudge along, in the freshness of the morning, swinging the tin pail, from camp to house—to be veritable hunters and trappers emerging from the wilderness into civilization was, reflected Percy, a function of importance.

"I wasn't scared, last night; were you?" prompted Spot.

"No; I knew what it was, all the time. I wanted to scare you other fellows."

"Huh, if it had been anything special we could have stung him with our sling-shots good and plenty, I bet," vaunted Spot.

They neared the milkman's house, and crossed his back yard, fragrant with barn smell. The dog was friendly. From the kitchen sounded an appetizing sizzling, and floated an appetizing odor, both significant, at this hour. But on the air welled another sound, equally familiar.

"I hear a baby," announced Percy.

"So do I. I didn't know they had a baby, did you?"

"Kind of," admitted Percy. "She's just the age of ours."

"She's got an awful voice, hasn't she!" pronounced Spot, judiciously. "Aint it funny how babies beller so?"

"That's how they exercise their lungs."

The milkman and his wife proved to be affable also. Mrs. Milkman was frying at the stove, and the baby—a real baby—was in her chair bawling to beat the band while Mr. Milkman tried to eat.

"I expect she wants to be held," said Mrs. Milkman, with a tired little smile.

"I'll hold her," offered Percy, eagerly.

"Take the pail, Spot."

"Naw," opposed Spot. "I'll hold her. You don't know how."

"I do, too. What's eating on you? Haven't we got a baby at our house?"

"We've got two," proclaimed Spot.

"I'll hold her first, and then you can hold her."

"Wait till I lift her out." And Mrs. Milkman obligingly transferred her to Percy's arms.

"There, there; don't cry, baby," crooned Percy, in professional style,

while Spot jealously watched. "What's her name?"

"Maud."

"There, Maud. Nice Maud. Want go by-by with Percy?"

To Percy's intense pride, the baby stopped her bawling, and stared and sucked her thumb. The triumph had been achieved.

"My turn, now," asserted Spot. "You aint holdin' her right, anyhow. You don't know how to hold a baby."

"I am, too," answered Percy. "I guess I know as much as you."

Spot carefully took her.

"Have you boys had breakfast yet?" queried Mrs. Milkman.

"No, ma'am."

"Better have a little something then before you go back," invited Mr. Milkman. "Sit down and draw up."

"I don't think we can, thank you," alleged Percy, with the limit of politeness. "We got to go back with the milk."

"Aw, they can wait," hazarded Spot, of mind more practical.

THEY deposited the baby in her chair (where Percy was certain that she cried for him and not for Spot,) and accepted to the full the duties of guests at table. That accomplished, the time had come for them to tear themselves away—when Percy had a brilliant idea.

"Can't we take her down to the tent, and show her to the other kids?" he asked.

"I'll carry her—you don't know how," he butted in Spot, at once.

"You wont, either. I'll carry her myself."

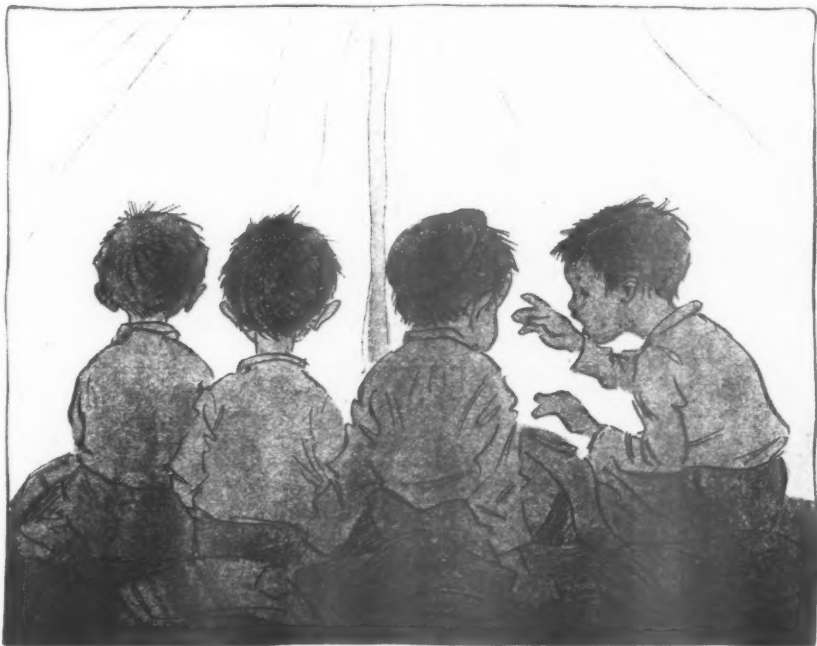
"I'll carry her part way, then."

"When will you bring her back?" assented Mrs. Milkman. "You wont keep her long, will you?"

"No, ma'am. We just want to show her to the other kids."

"All right. You can take her, if you'll be careful," further assented Mrs. Milkman, who was not loath to be relieved of a portion of her routine.

That was great—to return to camp with a baby. The way was short, and



Dusk gathered, and bed-time arrived.



they took turns carrying her; but they encountered the irate Hen, hurrying forward on vengeful trail.

"Where you kids been?" he demanded, panting. "Goin' to stay all day?"

"Lookie! We got a baby!" jubilated Spot and Percy. "Aint she cute?"

"What you goin' to do with her?" queried Hen suspiciously.

"Take her to camp. They said we could."

Hen flew to pieces.

"Aw, a baby in camp!" he stormed. "Who wants any old baby in camp! You can't have that baby in *my* camp! I aint goin' to tend no baby, and hear it beller all the time. This aint a baby camp. Can't you quit babies for a while? Where's that milk?"

Percy felt a momentary blankness of memory. So, anybody could see, did Spot. There was only the one confession.

"We forgot it. Honest we did, Hen. But it's there, a whole pailful."

Hen almost burst. His wrath was scorching.

"You darned old fools!" he berated. "You don't know anything but babies. You go off and forget the milk, and bring a baby. But you sha'n't put her in my tent—so there! And if you know what's good for yourselves you'll take her straight back where you got her. I'll fetch the milk myself."

So saying, departed Hen, furiously tramping the cow-path.

"We'll just show her to Fatty, is all," Spot and Percy would placate.

Fatty was much more open to advances. From his fire he stared in smudgy astonishment.

"What you got, kids?"

"A baby," they announced triumphantly.

"Where'd you get it?"

"At the house."

"Whose is it?"

"The milkman's."

"What is it—boy or girl?"

"Girl. Her name is Maud."

Fatty promptly left his post of cook.

"What you goin' to do with her?"

"Keep her a little while. They said we could."

"Lemme hold her."

"No. He doesn't know how. Does he, Spot?"

Fatty expressed himself roundly.

"I do, too! What you givin' us? I've tended baby more'n *you* have. Lemme hold her. You're makin' her bawl. Lemme hold her, and I'll show you how to stop 'em bawlin'."

They entrusted the baby to Fat, and all formed a circle of admiration not unmixed.

"She's cute, but she aint as cute as our baby," vouchsafed Percy.

"She's only got one tooth," criticised Fat. "Huh! When my baby brother was that old, bet you he had three or four."

"Bet you he didn't. He didn't have as many as *my* brother, or my sister, either," vaunted Spot.

"See if she can bite,"

Fatty experimented with grimy finger.

"You bet," he cried. "But she can't quite—" And so forth and so forth, until the coffee can (that was the Scouty way to make coffee, in a tin can) over-balanced and capsized.

At this crucial moment Hen arrived.

"Aw, gee!" he scolded. "There goes the coffee. Are you kids crazy? You got to take that baby back. Her mother told me to tell you. And I bet you've let the fish burn."

They had. At least, the fish seemed to have amalgamated with the mud, and the mud was so brick-like that the combination was past eating. Fat already had let the bacon burn.

There was no living with Hen, who so bitterly resented the presence of an in-offensive little baby. Assuredly she was cute (for her), but they took her home—Fatty being permitted to carry her the first third of the way. Hen stayed behind in high dudgeon.

The morning wore on slowly. The fish didn't bite, and the flies did. Hen was hot and so was the sun. Hen's father didn't appear, although weeks must have passed since home had been put far away. And Percy, for one, had a strange restless feeling that impelled him on various errands to the milkman's premises. Spot and Fatty likewise shuttled back and forth, while Hen waxed madder and madder.

"You're hefty Scouts!" he snarled.



"Where'd you get it?"

"You're nothin' but babies yourself. Got to go all the time and look at a baby! What did we come out here for, anyhow?"

"Taint so," retorted Percy. "Can't a fellow go get a drink? Lots of times we don't see her. She's asleep." But he did not add that a baby asleep, even, can be "awfully" cute—within natural limitations of ancestry.

Hen's cup apparently spilled over when Spot suddenly announced that he'd got to go home.

"What you goin' home for?"

"My mother wants me. I sorter promised I'd come. But I aint goin' to stay," he added, eagerly. "And I'll bring back a lot of stuff to eat."

Spot was determined; no reproaches or arguments could sway him. After the frugal dinner of cold beans from the convenient can, and the last of the bread, and water from the muddy creek, away he went—with him Fatty, who also had discovered a latent promise to report at headquarters.

"Those kids are the limit," denounced Hen; to which Percy stoutly agreed, as he watched them trudging off.

The afternoon wore on, punctuated, for Percy, by those occasional trips to the milkman's premises, where he might compare Maud with a contemporary much her superior. Each trip only incensed Hen the more; and not until almost sunset did Spot and Fat come toiling in.

They claimed that they had to tend baby awhile, and they brought back exceedingly meager provisions—chiefly two apples, on Spot's part, and two

crushed and damp cookies, on Fat's. These contributions had been solicitously preserved, for Hen and Percy. The paucity of visible assets from the journey to the base of supplies out yonder quite spoiled Hen for listening to the reports of how baby sister and baby brothers had received the call and had manifested an astonishing interest. So far as Percy could investigate, things were moving about as usual at the old place; but he had a keen desire to find out for himself.

This brimming impulse Hen ruthlessly nipped in the bud, so to speak, when, the next morning, he announced that he was going to make a trip out, and bring back stuff enough so that they'd have something else besides just beans.

"You kids can stay here, and if you want any baby you can play with your darned old Maud," he decreed. "Don't let those cows tear this tent, either. It's my father's tent, and he'll make you pay for it, too, if it's hurt."

Exit Hen, entrusted with a capital of six pennies, with which to buy six cents worth of butterscotch.

Noon came, but no Hen. Mid-afternoon came, but no Hen. Evening came,

but no Hen, and indignation was deep and vibrant, for the chances now were that he had eaten the butterscotch. Fat loudly bewailed his penny, and accused Hen of embezzlement, either before or after the fact of investment. The camp growled itself to bed. He was a pretty Boy Scout, Hen was! Thought he was playing smart, didn't he!

Not until ten o'clock, at least, did Hen turn up, in a surprising hurry. He'd changed his clothes, and wasn't dressed for camping, any more, and replied briskly and unashamed to the volley of questions.

"Aw, that's a great note! Where you been?"

"Home?"

"Aren't you goin' to camp any more?"

"Uh uh."

"Why not?"

"Don't want to."

"Didn't you bring us any stuff?"

"Uh uh. Didn't have time."

"You gimme back my cent, then," ordered Fat.

"All right. Here 'tis." And Hen honestly redistributed the funds, although the butterscotch would have been preferable.

"Aren't you going to camp any more, Hen? Aw, why not?"

"I can't. Got to be home."

"What you got to be home for? You've nothin' but old rabbits to 'tend to."

"I have, too."

"Haven't, either."

"Have, too." And Hen blurted the astounding news. "It came night before last."

"What did?"

"A baby, at our house!"

"Aw! It didn't."

"Did, too. It was there when I got home."

"What kind?"

"A girl, I guess," admitted Hen—adding, in haste: "But she's bigger'n any boy. Awful funny lookin' thing. I don't want to camp any more, and my father aint comin', either. You fellows can stay if you want to. We're goin' to name her Helen Martha, and maybe I can hold her to-morrow if I wont drop her. You ought to hear her bawl! I can hear her clean across the street. And she knows me already! The doctor says she's the finest baby he ever saw, and so does everybody, and we're goin' to have a rubber-tired baby cart that folds up. You fellows can stay here if you want to, but I aint, you bet. I'll have to tend her."

After such challenging developments, who would stay that had a mind alive to family honor and responsibilities? Only, as they hurried away, Percy put the leading question:

"Thought you didn't like babies?"

And Hen made full answer.

"I don't. But she aint like other babies. She's different. You oughta just see her."



"What d'you mean—get me?"



ILLUSTRATED BY  
WILLIAM VAN DRESSER

## Heavens of Brass

*THE story of the girl who gave up the effort for tinsel stars  
and went back to the place she had always called "home."*

By Walter Jones

Author of "A Small-Town Soul," etc.

**T**HE train wound its slow, cindery coil along the muddy river-bottom. Outside, the trees stood motionless in a hot June haze. The air in the car was stifling—the warped windows on the "branch accommodation" seldom opened.

Vivienne sat stiffly, with her hands folded in her lap. Her stylish street-gown and her dry-cleaned gloves shrank away from the soiled upholstery. For an hour now her unwilling eyes had been telegraphing her sinking heart that she was getting back home to Corbitsville.

From Oriopolis, the metropolis of her childhood, the train crawled past the "high mill" and the camp-meeting ground, the canning factory and the sink-hole, then the straggling grove at the top of Sunset Hill, from which she had often played Sarah Bernhardt to the stars and maples. Then—but they were almost in; the engine whistled dolorously and she could hear the brakes drag on.

She pulled down her veil and got out at the end of the platform away from the depot. From its 'bus circle about the

station, Main Street stretched away to the right in a ratty, knobby expanse of brick, toward "the business center" and "the residential section;" but Vivienne, with her suit-case, turned to her left across the heat-throbbing rails and over the rusty span of the bridge that led to the limbo of that undesirable region known as "the River Heights." A hundred yards ahead of her, on the sun-baked bluff above the track, stood the paint-cracked, shutterless dwelling she had always called her home.

Vivienne beheld it with no prodigal's thrill of joy. Before the door, a fallen tree was rotting; beside a roofless shed an old spring-wagon weathered into junk; across the yard a climbing rose, its trellis long since gone, ran riot. What a dump! It was back to the tamaracks, all right. She lifted the sagging gate grimly and fastened it with its rusty bucket-hoop. Only last October she had let herself out of it praying she might never return; and now—

At the sound of her approaching steps, a chubby pink heap on the porch wriggled into life and, with a welcoming shriek, came scampering down the path. Vivienne saw a flash of blue eyes and yellow hair; then felt an onslaught of dimpled arms about her neck, a sprinkle of soft kisses upon her cheek.

"Wiwie! Wiwie! My Wiwie's comed home! Ev'ry night I pwayed Duddy to bring her. But Mommer said Duddy don't have nothin' to do with this house an' mebbe she'd never come. But I knewed she would. An' I's so dlad. 'Cause my dolly's busted her head; an' my kitty's went sick an' throwed herself all up, an' nobody wouldn't do nothin' for her; an' my popper's been his other man again."—her voice took on a child's frightened throb; Vivienne felt the quick shudder of her tiny body—"an' once he hurted me. Look where—he hurted me—Wiwie!"

"There, precious, there!" She caught the cherub closer to her breast; her own tall, straight body gave an answering shudder. "He'll never hurt City again. Vivie won't let him. Show Vivie, and she'll kiss it all away. Then we'll go up and see Mommer and find what Vivie's brought for City."

As they neared the house, she saw a lineful of powder-bleached clothes in the yard. Through the open kitchen door, her lady-mother was visible, a potato-sack around her middle, bending over a wash-bench. Ann Slicker straightened up impassively at Vivienne's entrance. "So you're back." She edged a tub between herself and any possible demonstration. "Well, I s'pose you can see what I'm up to! Four-thirty, ar'd me head over heels in suds. That's just your style, young lady, aint it, stayin' away all winter with a troupe; then droppin' around home so't your maw can scrub her fingers off, when your washin's good and big? Turn 'round and lemme see what this show life's did to you. Ear-rings! No hips! My Gawd, aint my daughter a swell!"

As she crossed over to the stair-door that led upward from the dining-room, Vivienne gave back her mother's scrutiny calmly. "I guess I aint so swell, Mommer, that I can't punish a cake of soap. I'll be down in a minute and help you. My room's still there, aint it?"

FIFTEEN minutes later she was down-stairs again, lifting a boiler on the stove. "Don't you ever boil up your clothes any more, Mommer?"

"No, why should I? We aint got any that's worth boilin'. That wash-powder gets the dirt out of 'em good enough for ordinary folks. I'm goin' in the other room now and lay down a spell. I've got them shootin' pains all the time now. I aint never been a well woman since you went away." She turned resentfully, with her arms akimbo, in the doorway. "You're a hot one, you are! Why'n't you ever write a person where you was and when you was comin' back? I'd of had you brought me a box of them bitters they wont sell me no more at the drug-store; and mebbe one of them corsets to give me a shape."

"You'd oughtn't to take them bitters, Mommer. They've got dope in 'em. But if I'd known you wanted a corset—why can't you buy it here in town?"

"Huh. I guess you got to get yourself up to date on the fam'ly fortunes. There aint a dry-goods store in Corbitsville, that'd trust me for a hairpin!"

"Then what good'd it do to send away—"

"Oh, I thought mebbe my swell daughter, that goes traipsin' off with a troupe all winter, 'd turn kind-hearted on her old woman and get her one!"

Vivienne flushed.

"You don't need to get all slathered up about it. I didn't really mean you would. But if you'd had one sent on approval, I guess it wouldn't pay them people to have the law on a body for the price of a three-dollar corset."

Without replying, Vivienne picked up a basket of clothes and went out to the line. For an hour she kept out of her mother's way. At five-thirty she began setting the table. The nicked plates, jelly glasses for tumblers, and ten-cent-store tableware with its cheap plate worn off filled her with homesickness for the tawdry tidiness of even the fourth-class hotels of "the road."

"How many places?" she asked.

"Four."

"What're we goin' to have for supper?"

Mommer Slicker chuckled. "'S a great question for you to ask, aint it? Haint twenty years got you used to our menu? Potatoes and porridge. Plain, but fillin'. And I'm right smart at cookin' it up, I am!"

"Where's Irvine?" Vivienne glanced questioningly at the clock. "Shouldn't he be home from work soon?"

"Work! He aint been workin' for two months."

Vivienne's barometer sank. "But I thought he had that job—"

"Oh, he left the grocery wagon in December. Too plebeian for a Slicker! Anyway, them teachers kidded him into school again. But he wont stay. He says the boys guys him about his gypsy hair. His paw's whaled him a couple times within an inch of his life; but it don't do him no good."

"Does he play any now?"

"Does he! He's all the time yawlin' at that fiddle, till I haint got any nerves left."

Came a swift step on the path; then a boy appeared through the semi-night, tall as a man, slender as a reed, with olive skin and a mop of midnight hair,

his flannel shirt opened upon his tanned, flat chest. Vivienne's fingers caught his long, slender hands, and for a moment they looked deep into each other's eyes; then, with a self-conscious flush, he pushed her gently into the house. "How are you, Viv, old man? I just passed a guy on the road that said he seen you gettin' off the train lookin' like one swell baby-doll. But it haint taken you long to get out of your glad rags, has it?"

His fond parent caught the implied slur handily. "I guess there don't nobody have to stay long in this joint to have the swell taken out of 'em. Cynthia, if you drop them spools again, I'll lick you." The pink cherub made a hasty grab at her spools and ran, whimpering, to Vivienne. "That's it! Run to your sugar-plum tissums! But your maw's good enough to wash you and dress you, and cook up your food."

A SILENCE fell over the room. The kitchen clock ticked fatefully. Cynthia covered her eyes with her dimpled hands. The boy sat staring sullenly in front of him. Vivienne's face was white, but her voice lacked its old-time tremor as she asked the familiar question: "Where is *he*?"

"How should I know? Carousin' like he always does when he's got a dollar. Hank Ryder came here for him to do a job of plasterin' last week, and I told him he should give me the pay for it; but he said he was afraid Paw would get to him, if he did. He had six dollars for the job, and that's enough to get him fluko. He aint been home since yesterday morning; but he'll have it all spent by now, and they'll be kickin' him out."

"Has he acted up much this winter?"

"Twice he's reigned something awful; but he's only mixed it with me once. When he's pied, it makes him mad because Cynthia's afraid of him. He went for her, and I was scared he'd choke her before he knowed; so I throwed myself between, and he give me a welt on the breast that kep' me in bed for a week."

Vivienne shot her mother one of those rare glances of compassion that made her long intervals of repulsion tolerable. After all, whatever she was, her life had

made her. She was only clay. And the potter had shaped her on a junk-heap mold.

Vivienne took Cynthia in her lap, while Ann Slicker paced the floor. "It's time, Vivie. He'll be along any minute now. I dunno—should I send Citty to bed or leave her up? It gets him just as riled when he hears her bawling there in the dark."

"You can leave her up. I guess he wont hurt Citty to-night, Mommer."

"Well—mebbe I will. Mebbe he'll pick on Irvine to-night, anyway."

Vivienne set the lamp off the table out of harm's way. She made a circuit of the house and pulled down the tattered shades. "Is the bread knife hid?"

A shudder ran through the slight frame of the boy, who had not moved from the table. Her mother nodded—then held up a warning finger. "I hear them bushes rattlin'. It's him. Mind, Viv, you don't try nothin' high-handed, or he'll brain us all. Leave him to me. I'll wheedle 'im along."

An instant's pause; then the latch clicked and Popper Slicker's "other man" slanted into the room. With a belligerent look around, he slouched down at the table. In another sphere of life, he would have been a coarse-faced, handsome rake. He was not drunk enough to hiss his *f's*; only ugly, with the hang-over of an outraged stomach and a splitting head.

"Where's my supper?" He sniffed over the broken meal with ire. "Cold, huh? You're a nice bunch, eatin' before the head of the house gets home! Maw! Get me some hot pertatoes, and get 'em quick! I'll show you who's boss here."

"Yes, Paw, I'm just puttin' on the skillet. We wasn't expectin' you so soon."

"You wasn't, eh! Well, you'd better expect me any time I'm here. What you lookin' at, you young rowdy?" He turned his red-veined eyes savagely on Irvine. "What's the matter? Aint your paw han'some enough for you!"

As he picked up a cup, Vivienne started forward; but her mother put an arresting hand on her arm. "Now Paw, go easy. We only got four cups—"

"What do I care if we only got two?

I can drink better anyway out of a schooner." He held the cup an instant tauntingly in his fist, then dropped it over the edge of the table. His glance of triumph included his daughter. "So you're home, Miss Slicker! Why'n't you write and ask whether you was wanted? We keep a respectable house. We haint got no room to harbor show folks, have we, Maw?"

"Course not, Paw. But she's only on a visit. She—"

"Irvine, my ex-*kaw*-site child, go out in the garden and pull up your paw some onions. Some of them big ones that're good and strong. I got a hanker-in' for 'em. Gwan, don't stand there glommin' me, or I'll hunt up that fancy fiddle of yours and bust it over your head. Where's Cynthia?"

A stifled sob revealed her hiding-place.

"Come out from behind that sofy and kiss your popper."

"Now Paw, let her alone. She's been sick, to-day—"

"Come out of there, Cynthia! What do you-all mean, anyway, settin' her against me?"

"We aint settin' her against you," Vivienne cut in, "but she's all tired out to-day, Popper; she—"

"Shut up, *Miss* Vivienne! Who asked you to butt in?" His throat swelled with a sudden fury. "Maw, you bring her here to me, or I'll go after her and—"

"Yes, Paw, in just a minute. Soon's you've et your supper."

"*Now*, I said!" Quick as a flash he was on his feet with a platter, his frenzy focused upon a forest of yellow curls pressed close against the sofa. "Come out of there, you little she-devil! I'll teach you to run away from your popper!"

His wife shrieked and caught punily at his upraised arm; but it was Vivienne who sprang cat-like across a chair and towered before him, facing down the demons in his eyes. She was trembling, but her voice boomed out with a shrill that rocked the night. "You throw that dish, and you'll never throw another!"

His eyes measured hers a full minute, narrowed, and fell. "What d'you mean, you young hussy, givin' me orders in my



own home! Step out of my way. I'll show you who's boss here. I'll—"

"Put that dish down."

"I'll show you—" His bearing shifted, with a snarl of cunning. "I wouldn't ha' throwed it, Viv. I was just funnin'. I—"

"Put that dish down!"

He let the platter slip to the floor and dropped back into his chair. "I'll get you yet, young lady. To-night I aint feelin' good. But some other time I'll get you."

"What d'you mean—get me?" Vivienne still stood towering over him. "You try it, and the law'll get you: there's where the gettin' 'll be! You've pulled off your last riot in this house. You're done with whalin' Irvine, and beatin' up Maw, and scarin' City into spasms. The next time you grab a dish or lift a finger on any of us, I'll have a cop in and snap the nickel mitts on you. For five years I've been findin' most of the rent for this shack and helpin' on the grub. And I haint ever had anything out of it but fear and sorrow and shame to hold up my head on the street. And the curtain's comin' down on that act! Do you get me?" She stepped away from him quietly, gathered up a handful of dishes, and went into the kitchen.

"Jug me, huh? I'd like to see 'em! It'd take all the p'lice force in Corbitsville. Irvine, my young Gannermede, where's them onions?" His eye caught the bunch of green shoots by his plate. "Them little things aint no good."

"They're the biggest there was out there."

"You're a young liar. I seen bigger ones the other day. I'll go and get 'em myself; and when I come back, I'll whale you till—" With his threat unfinished, he lurched through the door.

Quick as a shot, Vivienne threw the bolt. "Now," she called evenly, "you're out, and you're goin' to stay out till you can come back sober and talk decent to your fam'ly."

Her ukase was followed by a quick hand on the knob—a batter of fists on the blistered door-panel, accompanied by a volley of curses. An experimental silence—then the thick-throated warn-

ing: "If that door aint open when I come back with them onions—I!"

Within, Ann Slicker sank back on the sofa, whimpering. "Now you've went and done it! I told you not to get high-handed with him. When he comes back, he'll break in and brain us all, or set the house afire, or do something dreadful."

Vivienne was unmoved. "You pull yourself together, Maw, and drag that arm-chair in front o' the parlor door; 'cause the lock aint strong. And Irvine, if he smashes in, you get ready to stand over City."

The boy looked up at her with frightened awe. "But Viv, aint we takin' chances? Hadn't I better run for a cop?"

She shook her head. "You see again't them windows 're all locked." Armed with a rolling-pin, she took up a position in the kitchen, waiting. At sight of herself in the broken mirror, she broke into hysterical laughter. "For a happy home, my Gawd, what a picture!"

Her mother raised a cautioning finger. "Ssh, he's back again."

They heard him fumbling the latch. Then began a fusillade of fists and curses. The silence inside frenzied him. He kicked against the panels. "Lemme in, Maw! Lemme in, or I'll bust in and get you all! I'll get that smart-Alecky daughter of mine! I'll—"

With a parting menace, his step stole off the porch. Presently a small square pane near the catch on a kitchen window fell shattered. A hand groped through. The rolling-pin descended. With a blue oath and a thin trickle of blood, the hand disappeared. The calling was renewed, in a tone less threatening now. "Maw! Maw! Lemme in! Let your old man in." After a silent interval, the footfalls tracked away toward the shed.

Irvine reconnoitered from a bed-room window. "I can see him through the cracks. He's tossin' up a bed on the straw. I guess he wont do nothing to us now."

"Well, we can go to bed, I guess." Ann Slicker stared, weary-eyed, at the broken platter. "It's been a turr'ble night. I think I'll just shake down here on the sofy."



Vivienne paused beside a tree. A sudden shock of apprehension

Vivienne gathered Cynthia into her lap. "You go on upstairs, 'Vine. He wont start anything now."

"I can't sleep, old man. I'm all stirred up. Gee, Viv, you got *nerve*! If I'd bluffed him down like that, he'd of killed me. It's a great home-comin for you, aint it? Tell me,"—a sudden eagerness lit up his face—"how'd the show stuff pan out? You still goin' to be one of them Sarah Bernhardts?"

She smiled wearily. "I can't tell you to-night, 'Vine. I'm too all-in. But to-morrow—"

"All right, Viv. You be sure and wake me, if he comes to life and starts anything."

With Cynthia in her lap, Vivienne kept solitary vigil till dawn. At seven, Slicker rat-tatted on the window. "Lemme in," he grumbled. "I'm 'most starved, and my j'int's 're all stiffened



tautened her nerves.

up." His tone was normal; his looks only sullen. Vivienne opened the door without parley. He ate his breakfast in majestic silence, lit a cob-pipe, and fell asleep in the door-yard. At noon, a carpenter came to see him about the plastering of a new house. From a parlor window the family watched him back out his work-cart from the shed and trundle it away. In grudging admiration, Mommer Slicker turned to her daughter.

"Well, Vivvie, I've got to hand it to you for once. You've throwed the old buck off his high horse—if it only lasts."

In the twilight that evening, Viv' and 'Vine climbed up to Sunset Hill. "Come across, old man," he drawled at her feet. "What's the dope? I s'pose you're hikin' up the hill to fame already. Is it all there like we thought, with the brass bands and cream cake?"

"Yes, 'Vine, all there, with three drums in the band and double filling in the cream cake!" She looked down at him thrillingly. "Why, the prima donna in our show owns six Paris gowns! And every night she's sore, when she don't get a half a dozen encores on her waltz song. I've listened to orchestra music that'd draw the Hicksville heart right out of you! And one night a gentleman friend staked me to a five-dollar feed that tasted like five hundred!"

"It's all there, like one beautiful big Christmas tree,"—the thrill died out of her voice,—“but there aint no present on it for me. The tinsel stars 're all high up and there's too many people grabbin', and I am a jay beside. It's this way, kiddo. To make good, you've got to put something across: your face, or your voice, or your kick, or something. But I aint a Lillian Russell Venus, nor a clown that anybody'd pay to see. My holler's got only a couple of chorus notes. And a look at me dancin' 'd paralyze Isadora Duncan. There's only one other way—and I aint seen a picture of myself takin' that yet."

He looked up at her with flushed surprise. "You mean there's fresh guys in the business?"

"Yes. Understand, I aint knockin' the stage. I'm out of the cradle-roll and I guess I can take care of myself. But there's plenty of chances to get off at Primrose Alley."

"Then you aint goin' back again in the fall?"

"I don't know. I could join for a medium with 'The Nightingale' company another season. But that's a long ways from a tinsel star. And with the lay-out here, I don't suppose I'd ought to."

He reached up and clasped his hand shyly in hers. "I'm sorry, Viv, old man, that it's all busted up like this. I

thought you was goin' out to your fame and fortune."

She pressed his fingers tightly in hers. "I'm glad I went, though, 'Vine. I've had a look into the big world, and met a bunch of classy girls and a couple of nice men that'd never have spoke to me in this burg, and any old town we landed in I could swell up Main Street without bein' spotted for a souse's daughter."

"That's me, too. I hate this darn hole. Sometimes I feel like I'm going to hop a freight and beat it out of here."

"You wont have to do that, 'Vine. I've had my chance—and failed. Now it's yours."

"What d'you mean?"

"Your music. I always thought you had it in you; but I've seen the real professional thing now, and I know."

"You don't mean that I?"—he threw back his head with an incredulous gasp—"could get by on the stage, Viv?"

"Yes, 'Vine. There and mebbe higher. For anybody that's good lookin' and can rag a violin, vaudeville's a cinch! I know a boy who sings in the Chicago picture houses that says he'll try to get you in right. You'll have to begin in a movie, or a restaurant, or a small-time orchestra—anything to make a start and work toward a try-out."

"Wouldn't that be great, Viv, if I *could* get my name on them variety bills! But I'm flat broke, Viv—not even the price of a fare to Oriopolis."

"Never mind, I'll manage that. I've got thirty dollars in my jeans that'll buy you a decent suit of clothes and see you under the big top."

"But I couldn't take it, Viv! You'll need it to stake yourself out next fall."

"I guess I'll be stakin' myself to a mop next fall! You've got to take it: it goes with the chance. But listen, boy,"—she laced his fingers more tightly in hers—"you've got to find a job right off and *tie* yourself to it. That's the only way to come through. Remember the failin' that's in the fam'ly. And you've been smokin' cigarettes. I've seen the stain on your fingers. That's the only string that's tied to the thirty dollars: you've got to cut all that stuff out."

He looked up at her with reproachful eyes. "I've only smoked 'em sometimes for company, when I'm mis'able and down on myself. And you needn't be afraid of me hittin' the booze—after seein' *him* last night. How soon, Viv, d'you think I could start?"

She smiled wistfully at his eagerness. "We'll go down-town and pick out the suit to-morrow."

"You're a brick, Viv, old man,"—they walked back, hand in hand, through the twilight,—“and of course, soon's I'm on my feet, I'll pay you back."

In less than a week she had him ready to go: his meager wardrobe mended, his two neckties pressed, an extra dollar-bill slipped in his collar-box. As his train pulled out, she stood on the platform, misty-eyed, but smiling. "Remember, 'Vine, they're high up, them tinsel stars."

Her mother awaited her return from the depot with fervid comment. "I s'pose you're satisfied now you've took Irvine away from me! I should think you'd have turned your money in here where it was needed, 'stead of startin' your brother on the road to the devil."

"What d'you mean, Mommer? 'Vine's a clever kid. I aint a-goin' to see the life stamped out of him in this draggle-heels hole."

"Clever, huh? Sly! He's his popper's son. Already I've smelt liquor on him; and he was in that gang that got Tressie Ferris in bad with the correction officer last winter." She turned on her heel and left Vivienne gaping.

Was it truth? Or only the sizzling acid of maternal jealousy?

The next morning, Miss Slicker crammed her pride in her pocket and sought back the job in Hinman's Bon Ton Millinery from which Art had summoned her. On her first pay-day, she took account of stock: she had thirty-six dollars coming in, and—fifty that ought to be going out! Somehow she'd have to find more. She began to knit shawls in the evenings. Although it was the end of June, she bought several packets of seeds and planted late vegetables. A pig was her triumph of thrift. As she threw "Woots" his first meal, she

smiled sardonically. Sarah Bernhardt fattening a porker!

Popper Slicker drank now two periods to every one he worked; but he brought his "package" home decorously. His jag days were over. Like a sword of Damocles, the handcuffs hung over him.

His first week out, 'Vine wrote twice—the next once. By the third he had a job in a Halsted Street movie. He told rapturously of his introduction to Madison Street and the Rialto. A heart-wearing interval. The movie-house had changed to traps and tympani. Another interval. He was playing in a Rathskeller now. It sure was the life! Ten days of silence. Then a brief note: Could she slip him a *V*? The management was wishing dinner-coats on the orchestra. His next spoke innocently of the Lake Shore Drive and a girl who had asked him to a settlement-house dance. If anyone but 'Vine had written it—white-wash? That night Vivienne sat long among the shadows of Sunset Hill, her eyes peering through the night toward the great city, as if the very power of her gaze must keep her wanderer in the path called straight.

By August the strain began to tell. As Vivienne day after day squinted up at a sky as giddy-blue, as scorching, as merciless, as her own seared life, there came to her out of her past the prophetic memory of a text that belonged to the still hopeful days when her mother had tied a pink ribbon in her hair and sent her off to the steepled church on the public square. The solemn pastor had read it, frowning, out of the Big Book on his velvet-spread pulpit: "Thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron." A heaven of brass! The phrase had haunted her school-girl brain. She had placed it fearfully as part of some terrible curse. But wherefore? And upon whom? Now she understood: it was the bright particular curse of the Corbittsville-River-Heights-Slicker lay-out!

Then one dun-colored, all-the-world-against-her day burst a patch of light, in the guise of a note from the boy who sang in the picture houses.

Dear Girlie—

I been working ev'ry day this summer. A friend of mine's got me a week in Oriopolis. I looked it up and seen it's near your home burg. They don't have any Monday matinée; so I thought, if agreeable to you, I'd drop around and talk over old times in 'The Nightingale' company. Yours, old girl, for a good chin—

EDDIE DENTER.

It was Saturday night and there was no time for a reply. She could only wait, palpitating, at the depot. "Han'some Eddie!" A trifle of a flash—but all chorus-men were. She had never dreamed he cared more for her than the other girls. Of course it was only a friendly call. Still—

Her thoughts were air-castling, when he swung from the train. "Hullo, Viv!"—like a high-power lamp the voltage of his personality played over her. "This region sure is some tanglefoot trail! But *you're* lookin' fine. You'd carry class in Scowhegan."

"Quit your kiddin'! Say,"—she plunged boldly into the necessary lie—"we got sickness in our home'll prevent me askin' you out there, but they say the hotel slings pretty good up-state grub."

"Lead on, little one. Anywhere with Venus!" He made their small-time meal gay with stories of the company. "I seen Bella in the College Inn the other night with a bunch o' di'monds on her like an ice-route! She's went and hitched herself to an old duck in a tanning business, that looks like he'd begun the works on hisself. It was a real affectin' meeting. She says to me, 'Eddie, I'm marryin' this boob for what I can shake him down for. But the next time it'll be love, so you better stick around.' Kiddin', o' course, but at that I think I could turn the hoop trick with her."

"You aint stuck on yourself, are you, Eddie?" It seemed good to laugh again.

He leaned impudently across the table. "No, but I'm stuck on you, baby doll!"

"He falls for the ladies ev'ry time!" she hummed.

He acknowledged the soft impeachment. "Lovely pastures—lots o' flowers

—sipping honey—I'm some bee! That's life."

Their desserts were finished all too soon, and they strolled back toward the 'bus circle. Eddie was like a breath of perfume in a tomb. She was loath to have him go. "It don't seem like it could be time for your train yet! Where's the hours went?"

"Dunno. Never would, if I was spendin' 'em with you, little one."

"You're going' back with 'The Nightingale' in the fall?"

"Nix. There's a better meal-ticket in the movies. You'll get the call around September onest. I'll look for you in Chi."

"But I don't think I'm joining."

"Aw, say—"

"We got sickness in the fam'ly, like I said."

"That's rough, old girl! There aint any sense in a queen like you bein' buried in this old quarry. But you'll be in town anyway, wont you, once in a while, and look in on a guy? Take it honest from me, Vivvie, there aint a skirt livin' I'd rather show a good time to than you. Here, this card'll get me—any time—in my music publishers—they always know where I'm singin'. Hullo, what's the ballyhoo? 'S the village cut-up broke loose?"

Where Main Street debouched upon the 'bus circle, a gaping, small-town crowd gathered, ten deep, about the curb. Eddie elbowed his way through. "Somebody must have throwed a fit," he called over his shoulder.

Vivienne paused beside a tree. A sudden shock of apprehension tautened her nerves. "What is it, Eddie?"

He backed out with a grimace. "Some old geezer with the snakes. Come on away."

But she had loosened the grip of his arm and was breaking through the mob. For an instant she bent over the dust-soiled, heaving heap in the gutter; then she stooped down and raised its head. "Call the 'bus!" she ordered.

"Let the old souse go."—Eddie was at her side. "You can't do anything. He—"

"It's my father."

Together with the 'bus driver, Eddie

lifted him in. Vivienne followed. He paused, with his foot on the step. She pushed him gently away. "I'm awf'ly sorry for draggin' you into a mess like this." Her voice cut clear and chiselly, like the drive of steel on stone. "You go on now and catch your train."

"That's all right, old kid. Hadn't I better—"

"Hand me his hat. Now run on to your train."

"All right, if you say. I'll write from Chicago. I'll—"

The gaping crowd, eager for the last morbid detail, edged between and shut him from view. She sat very straight and still, as the 'bus jolted over the bridge and up the rough cart-road. Once the battered object across from her seemed about to tumble to the floor; she reached out and touched it as she would have touched a thing diseased.

With her mother's aid, they got him onto the sofa. When the 'bus driver had gone, Ann Slicker burst into lamentation. "Oh, my Gawd! My Gawd! Where'd they find him, Vivie? In the street, where all them yappin' loafers hangs around? In the gutter! My husband—I always said he'd come to that. And look! Just to-day it came,"—she ran frantically to the table and held up a pink box,—"this corset! A straight front, Vivie, with pink ribbons! I was goin' to put it on with my old blue taffeter and go out decent among folks. Five years I've been livin' in a sacque and a wrapper. And now I'll be ashamed ever to hold up my head in the street again. Oh, my Gawd, why was I born? Why'n't they leave him where he fell? Why'n't they leave him?"

Through all her life Vivienne remembered that moment as the ultimate depth of her pit. "Shut up, Mommer—aint you ashamed?—and bring me a basin and some water. Can't you see he's sufferin'?"

Paw Slicker was a long time recovering from his exploit in the 'bus circle. When they finally got him up and around again, it developed that something was wrong with his inside works: either the cobble-stones or the booze had got to them. He couldn't remember anything or anybody. He would look at



Vivienne blankly: "Who are you? Oh yes, Miss Slicker, that used to be my daughter till she ran away with a show troupe." He conceived a particular aversion for Cynthia: "Take her away! Take that little pink devil away! Cynthia *who?* She wasn't never any child of mine."

When an Oriopolis doctor had settled her to the verdict that there was no hope for her father's reason, it suddenly dawned upon Vivienne's overwrought nerves that she had been three weeks without a letter from Irvine. An anxious telegram brought no reply. For a week she weighed a dozen torturing possibilities, then asked Mrs. Hinman for a day off. "I've got to go and find him, Mommer," she said. "I'm afraid he's sick in the hospital, or something's happened."

Scarcely brooking the journey's delays, she began inquiries at the Rathskeller where he had last played; but it was not until late the following afternoon that her rebuffed questions at last met with a dour affirmative from a sharp-featured, Chicago Avenue landlady. "Yes, that's the party you describe. He left here two weeks ago. I put him out—though he'd have gone anyway. He couldn't pay his rent, so I stood out his baggage."

"You—you don't know where he went? I'm his sister, and we've been anxious about him at home."

"No."—her tone softened.—"but I heard him talking with another boy in his room, and I think they planned joining a road show, booking West, or something."

"He wasn't ever—troublesome?"

"No. I've smelt liquor in his room; but he wasn't never ungentlem'nly to me. Like to see his things?"

Vivienne followed her to a basement store-room, where she brought out a battered suit-case and retired to her own parlor across the hall. In the semi-darkness, Vivienne turned over the contents—that told their own story: a tattered roll of sheet music; an onyx-green vest; a dog-eared poker deck; photographs, invariably signed, "Your baby doll," or "Lovingly, Ida;" a quire of note paper, with a letter already be-

gun on the top sheet—her heart gave a faster bound—to herself:

Dear Viv, old man, good-by. By the time you get this I don't know where I'll be. I aint written because I've been too ashamed. I'm passing the buck, that's all. I've found a couple of jobs—but I couldn't *tie*. It's all right till I get down on myself; but when I'm blue, I don't care what I do. Oh, Viv, I hate to tell you—it'll break your heart like it breaks mine to write it, but—I'm takin' coke, for them spells I get. Not much yet; but I s'pose it'll grow on me. A lot of the boys takes it. Forgive me, if you can, Viv, for going back on you like this. And don't blame me *all*. Maybe it's the *taint* a little—what I've got from *him*. I—

VIVIENNE turned mechanically back toward the Loop. Gone! Her 'Vine, for whom she would have given her life—into the unknown shambles of the world's black sheep. And she had sent him forth to the slaughter.

She walked slowly toward the station, looking wistfully into the faces of passers-by, vengefully into windows whose happy pictures mocked her. In all the city, in all the world, she was alone. Oh, for the look of a friendly face, the sound of a friendly voice, the clasp of a friendly hand!

Suddenly, like a beacon on a reefy coast, Eddie Denter illumined her shipwrecked thoughts. The shame of the depot episode had kept him from her mind. Yet he had written a tactful note, and renewed his invitation to drop around. Why not? Just to see him, would cheer her; to assure herself that even a chorus-boy cared, would give her courage; and perhaps he could help her find 'Vine.

She remembered the name of the music publishers. They told her the house where Eddie was plugging their songs. In half an hour his strong white hand was gripping hers, in the wings. "Say, girlie," he cried, "it's like eye lotion to see you! When'd you get in? You aint lookin' quite up to class. They workin' you too hard with the show?"

"I—I aint rehearsin'," she stammered.

"Oh, special for Eddie! Well, say—"

"No, I had errands. I just thought



I'd drop around. I'm feelin' kind of tired, that's all."

"Just step out in front a few minutes. I'm goin' on again to sing 'My Mooney, Spooney Man;' then we'll beat it to some cats and tear off a couple yards o' talk. Honest, girlie, I couldn't have been tickleder if the queen o' Sheba'd blowed in on me!"

He took her to a down-town table d'hôte. Over their dinner she told him about Irvine. He made light of the disappearance. "That's rough, old girl!" he sympathized. "But we'll find him yet and ship him back to the tamaracks. You can put an ad in the perffessional papers; news always travels in the show business; and then, he's liable to turn up over-night at that Rathskeller."

"No, he wont. And Eddie, I'm to blame—"

"No, you aint. And never mind, he aint dead yet. We got to go back to the show-shop now. I'm on again at seven."

"But I can't go back with you, Eddie. I've got to catch my train."

"Aw, come on. Didn't you say you had till two? I'll rag them blues out of you."

Reluctantly she came. As well wait one place as another, she told herself; but it was his smile, his singing, the friendliness of him that drew her.

He was through at ten-thirty. "Now, then," he commanded cosily, "the next thing's a little lunch in my room."

She glanced up at him in surprise. "It'll make me late for my train, and besides—"

"Now don't worry, girlie. You've lots of time, and—"

"Well, just a salad then. Here's a restaurant—"

"No, there aint any in this neighborhood that're any good. The room's all right. Just like a person's own parlor. O' course we'll leave the door on the string. And if you *should* miss your train, the old lady'll look after you just like she was your momma."

"But I daren't miss it, Eddie. I'm due to work at—"

"Well, you wont. Though if I was sent up for ten years in that Corbitsville dump, I wouldn't fret about grabbin' off ten hours of good time."

She felt his arm slip coaxingly through hers and draw her into a delicatessen. Before she realized, he had made purchases—rye bread, cheese, and ginger ale—and was heading for his lodgings. As he deposited the bundles in his room, he whistled. "Darn, I forgot the mustard! The old lady aint in or I'd get hers. You make yourself at home, girlie, and lay out the grub, while I run round the corner for some. We're goin' to have some kippy little feed, aint we?"

As he hurried down the stairs, warbling a Rathskeller tune, Vivienne looked about her. It was a gaudy room, in woodwork that had once been white, with flounces over everything. Not much like a parlor. And she had expected it would be on the lower floor. She began laying out the things. A sound of muffled voices in the hallway made her uneasy. Suddenly she pricked up her ears. A door opened and closed upon a woman's shrill scream of laughter. She glanced up with instinctive alarm. Her eyes took in the details of the room. On the wall reclined a *déshontée* Venus, more celebrated for her beauty than her wardrobe. Over the chandelier hung a long chamois glove. The pin-cushion on the dresser was a chorus-girl's slipper. Without reason, these frivolous furnishings took on a sinister meaning. As she crossed nervously to the door, the whole thing flashed upon her: "Lovely pastures—lots o' flowers—sipping honey—and I'm some bee!"

Her fingers were on the knob. Turning it, she hesitated. After all, she had invited her own fate. Her loneliness had been too eager, her distress too blind. And Eddie was kind. He had lifted her father from the gutter—and was still kind. "That's rough, old girl!" How her heart had fluttered toward his sympathy. His warm hand in hers was tinder to banked fires—the play of his dazzling smile a spark to a dead anvil. She had failed herself. Her brother had failed her. And now her friend. There was no one left to tie to. They were rotten, anyway, the whole Slicker tribe. What difference if one more? She put a stressful hand to her forehead. It was



"Tay with me always," Citty insisted. "Till I drow up to be a Tarnh Bernhardt."

wet with a cold, damp sweat. As she drew out her handkerchief, her quickened ear heard something drop to the floor. In dismay, she bent over, groping,—even a quarter was precious!—and brought up to the light—an arm of Citty's china-doll!

She clutched it in her hand convulsively. A mute memento of the pink cherub and the catastrophe of her last Sabbath's promenade, it caught the ebb of her lowered vitality and brought her blood back surging with a wave of shame. She felt Cynthia's arms tugging at her neck, the shower of Cynthia's kisses on her cheeks: "It's so dlad my Wiwie's home! Is it Sunday to-morrow, Wiwie? When is it Sunday, so we can dweess my dolly up an' take her for a walk?"

The extradition of her consciousness was instant; her return to conscience, complete. The only thing now was to get away. Her heart pumped in her throat. What if the street-door were locked? Or if she should meet him on the stairs? She slid into the hall. A flight below she heard his buoyant step. He was crooning "My Mooney, Spooney Man." At the turn of the banister there was a faucet and a sink. Flattening herself behind it, she waited till he passed, then shot downward.

MORNING mists were still hanging over the lowlands when the milk train on "the branch" pulled out. As it coiled slowly along the muddy river-bottom, Vivienne leaned back against the soiled upholstery. One by one, through the rain-splashed windows, the old landmarks slipped by: the "high mill," and the camp-meeting ground; the canning factory; Sunset Hill. She was getting back to the tamaracks again; back to the Bon Ton's frowsy work-room; back to the squalors of "River Heights,"—back, this time, for keeps.

"O God," she groped, "is there anything decent anywhere? Anything good? Help me to find it. Is anyone happy? Anyone straight? Show me one ray of light. One tinsel star."

HER father was puffing a pipe in the doorway. He stared at her vacantly. "Who are you? Oh yes, Miss Slicker, that used to be my daughter—"

As she passed on into the house, Ann Slicker looked up darkly from the stove. "Where's Irvine? Did you bring him?"

She shook her head.

"I knowed you wouldn't! I knowed he'd never set foot in this house again. You've been a nice daughter to me!"

She closed the stair-door against her mother's tirade.

"Wiwie, is that you? Tum up here, tum up here wight away!"

It was Cynthia! Her guilty step hastened. The pink cherub was poised upon the edge of her bed, her lids swollen, her lips screwing back a sob. Vivienne made one bound and gathered her to her arms. "Citty, my tinsel star!"

"Kweeze me, Wiwie! Kweeze me tight! Bad Wiwie, that runned off an' leaved me!"

"But Vivie never will again, precious. She'll stay with you always." It was at once a penitence, a thanksgiving, and a pledge.

"Tay with me always?" Citty insisted. "Till I drow up an' be a Tarah Bernhardt?"

"Yes—always!"

"'Cause last night I cwied; an' there didn't nobody undweess me; an' my mommer wouldn't dive my kitty her milk; an' you pwomised my dolly you'd kwew on her arm. What you cwyin' for, Wiwie? I never knewed you an' dolly was made with a cwy. Tell Citty"—she offered her red lips eagerly—"where it hurts, an' she'll tiss it all away."

"Oh, Citty,—you can't kiss it, precious,"—like the long-pent rain from the brazen heavens upon the sun-baked surface of the bluff, her tears fell and quickened again the parched roots of her spirit,—“you can't kiss it—where it hurts.”

Cynthia looked up at her beautiful, tragic sister perplexedly. "Well then,"—she snuggled sagely against Vivienne's breast,—“we'll tell Doddy an' make him tiss it.”

A great attraction of Walter Jones' work is its variety. Next month "What's the Matter With Our House," will show you what he can do in a more joyous mood.



ILLUSTRATED  
BY  
REA IRVIN

## Buried Bones

*AN exploit of that eminent detectakative, Philo Gubb, graduate of the Rising Sun Correspondence School of Detecting.*

By Ellis Parker Butler

*America's Foremost Humorist*

**C**HI FOXY started on the long thirty-mile walk from Derlingport to Riverbank. He was pushed across the city line by a big policeman and ordered not to come back. And at sundown he had gone seven miles and made his bed in a convenient haystack. During the night the air suddenly chilled and Chi Foxy knew it was time to hunt winter quarters. He would have turned back, but every tramp knew that Derlingport handled vagrants unkindly, while Riverbank treated them as well as could be expected under the circumstances.

Riverbank had a new and comfortable jail. It was a county jail, run by the sheriff, and the sheriff was paid so much a day by the town for any prisoners placed in the jail by the town authorities. This was a pleasant arrangement for the prisoners. When the town had turned a prisoner over to the sheriff, the town's interest ended, and when the sheriff received a "boarder" and was sure of his pay, he had no reason to treat the prisoner harshly. It had become a tramp

maxim, "If possible get four months in the Riverbank jail when winter arrives." So Chi Foxy continued toward Riverbank.

He walked slowly, and night found him on the outskirts of the town. He begged a hand-out from one of the small houses on his way and hunted a place to spend the night. He found it underneath a tool-house alongside the railway tracks. The tool-house stood with its front almost touching the ends of the ties, while the rear stood on a pile of criss-crossed ties, built up on the sandy ground which was lower than the raised roadbed of the railway. The ties made an open-work basement for the tool-house, and that it had been used as sleeping-quarters by other tramps was shown by the heap of crushed straw, the bread-crusts and the remnants of a small fire.

Chi Foxy crawled in and stretched himself out for a comfortable night. He lighted his pipe, loosened the laces of his shoes and settled back for a comfortable smoke until sleep should overtake him.

Just outside the rear of his tie sleeping

quarters ran the wire right-of-way fence, which was also the back fence of a small piece of property on which stood a rickety old house. The house was devoid of paint and probably never had been painted, but it was a cheerful sight from where Chi Foxy reclined. He had a clear view of the kitchen window, from which the light came in a yellow glow, and he could see a woman cooking something in a frying pan on a kitchen stove. A man sat beside the stove, his elbows on his knees, waiting for supper.

Chi Foxy almost decided to climb the fence and knock at the door of the kitchen at the moment the woman took the frying pan off the stove, but he was feeling well filled and comfortable, and he decided to wait and to use the house as his breakfasting place. This required no little strength of character, for the perfume of fried veal chops was wafted to his nostrils, but he held himself in hand and when he had burned his pipeful of tobacco he curled down and went to sleep.

He was awakened by the sound of voices near at hand and peered out between the ties. The night was not dark. There was no moon, but the myriad bright October stars gave sufficient light to enable Chi Foxy to see. As he looked he was able to see even more plainly. The voices had come from a man and a woman, and as Chi Foxy watched them the man began digging in the sandy soil with a spade. He made quite a hole in the soil and turned to the woman.

"Hand me the bag," he said.

The woman dragged a heavy gunny-sack to the edge of the hole. The man untwisted the neck of the bag and upended it over the hole. There followed the rattle of bones, one striking against the other, and the man handed the bag back to the woman. Chi Foxy peered eagerly at the hole. He saw bones. He looked up at the stars and saw it must be well after midnight. He saw the man hastily spade the soft soil over the bones, saw him scatter loose dry top-sand over the completed job, and saw the man and woman hurry back to the dark house.

"Say! What do you think of that!" he said to himself, and turned over to finish his night's rest.

The next morning—or when the sun was well up in the east—Chi Foxy left his resting place and climbed over the wire fence. He looked curiously at the spot where the weird burial had taken place, and went on toward the house. A ribbon of blue smoke was coming from the kitchen chimney, blown toward the south, and the breeze that drove the smoke was chill and keen enough to make Chi Foxy turn his head away from it. He knocked on the door, and it was opened by the man—a tall, lanky, coarse-bearded specimen.

"Say, friend, how about givin' a feller some breakfast?" asked Chi Foxy.

"How 'bout it, Ma?" asked the man, turning his head. "Got some breakfast for this feller?"

The woman looked toward the tramp. She evidently decided in his favor.

"Let him set on the step and I kin hand him out some coffee and some meat, if that'll do him," she said, and Chi Foxy seated himself. The breakfast she brought him on a chipped plate was all he could have desired. There was a half of a veal cutlet, browned to a nicety, a portion of fried potatoes, a thick slice of bread without butter, and a cup of coffee. Chi Foxy ate and drank.

"Thanks, folks," he said. "I wont forget you." And he continued on his way toward Riverbank. He meant to get himself snugly arrested before night and turned over to the keeper of the best jail in Iowa. It was a business matter, just as some wealthy man might set about securing his room in a winter-resort.

Chi Foxy had handled this business before. The routine was to walk into town until he met a policeman. The policeman would warn him to get out of town—"vagrants not allowed." Instead of getting out of town he would continue toward the center of the town, and another policeman would stop him and warn him. The third policeman would take him to the lock-up; about four o'clock he would be taken before the police judge and fined for vagrancy; at five, being unable to pay the fine, he would find himself in the county jail beginning to bear the pleasant serving time commensurate with the amount of the unpaid fine.

He met a policeman before he had walked five minutes. He put his hands deep in his pockets, pulled his hat well over his eyes, hung his head and made a good imitation of a tramp trying to sneak past a policeman without being stopped. This policeman stopped him.

"No use, bo!" said the policeman. "Can't work that game here, now."

Chi Foxy gave the officer a glance and trudged on. He met a second policeman in the heart of the town and repeated his sneaking-by tactic. The policeman halted him.

"Here, you!" said the officer. "You get out of town, understand? That old winter-hotel game don't go here any more. This place is tired of paying winter board for you fellows. Get out of town, and get out quick."

Chi Foxy sneered. He tried to make it an extremely insolent sneer, but it had no effect on the officer. The tramp walked on, and met the third policeman.

"So you're here," said the third policeman, and he seemed amused. "Right on time with the first frosty breeze, aint you? Well, my friend, you can blow out of town on the breeze, just like you blew in. No more free board and gentle stone-pile massage in this town. Drift along, bo!"

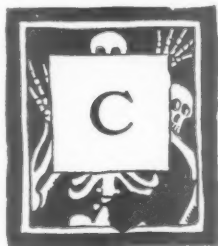
The unanimity of the police of Riverbank on the subject of free board and lodging was disheartening. If Chi Foxy had not been more than the average tramp he would have "drifted" as advised, but he had not gained his title of "Foxy" without some of the attributes of the fox to justify it.

He turned up the first cross street. If a man can't be arrested as plain vagrant he can be arrested as a suspicious character and jailed as a vagrant. Chi Foxy sought a back street where a chicken coop stood alongside a vacant lot. He began to maneuver around the chicken coop. He meant to be suspiciously near the chicken coop when a policeman appeared. He intended to be found acting so suspiciously that even a Riverbank policeman would arrest him.

He behaved in the most suspicious manner for three-quarters of a day, but it was unavailing. Not a policeman appeared.

The nights were getting colder. Three days Chi Foxy acted in a suspicious manner, and three nights he slept in uncomfortable places. The third night he slept under the band-stand in the park and he crawled from under it half frozen. He went from house to house begging a breakfast, but the residents were colder than the weather. At the twelfth house he knocked on the back door but he was beginning to feel hopeless. A thin streamer of smoke was issuing from the kitchen chimney, and where there is smoke there is food; but here, instead of a hard-faced woman or surly cook coming to the door, a man put his face to the kitchen window and looked out. It was the face of a tall, thin man with a long neck and prominent Adam's-apple, and as the man peered out of the window he looked something like a flamingo. He opened the door.

"Come right into the inside," he said pleasantly, "and heat yourself up warm. The temperature is full of cold weather to-day."



**H I F O X Y**  
entered. He looked around the kitchen. There was a brisk fire in the stove, but no sign of breakfast.

"Say, pard," he said, "how about giving me a bite of breakfast? I haven't had a bite this morning. I aint too late, am I?"

His host looked at him.

"You are not too late for any morning breakfast in this house," he answered, "because it may be some days of time before there is any here."

"You can't tell me that, bo," said Chi Foxy. "Look at the fire in the stove. You don't fire up like that for nothing, do you?"

"Yes, I do; for almost less that nothing," said his host, "for what's burning into that stove is the unvalucless trimmings off of wall paper, which I put into it to get rid of. I'm not the regular resider at this house by no means."

Chi Foxy looked at his host again. "You're a paper-hanger, aint you?" he said.

"Paper-hanger and deteckative," said his host proudly. "My name is Mister P. Gubb, graduate of the Rising Sun Detekative Agency's Correspondence School of Detekating in twelve lessons. And paper-hanging done in a neat manner."

Chi Foxy held out his hand eagerly. "Shake, pard!" he said. "That's my line, too."

"Paper-hanging?" asked Philo Gubb.

"Detecting," said Chi Foxy promptly. "I'm one of the most famousest gum-shoe fellers in the world. Me and this here great detective feller—what's his name, now?—used to work team work together."

"Burns?" suggested Philo Gubb.

"Holmes," said Chi Foxy. "Sherlock Holmes. Me and him pulled off some of them big jobs you maybe have read about in the papers."

He pronounced the name of the celebrated detective of fiction "Shermlock Hollums."

"Oh, yes," said the tramp, "me and Shermlock was great chums up to the time he falled over the cliff and got killed."

"You must have got the name wrong," said P. Gubb, "because Mr. Holmes is still being quoted in the papers right along."

"Is that so! Is that so!" said Chi Foxy. "And to think of that little feller growin' up into manhood already! It beats all how time flies."

"To what little feller did you refer to?" asked Philo Gubb.

"Why, my old side partner's little son, Shermlock Hollums the Twoth," said Chi Foxy without a blink. "And a cunnin' little feller he was—took after his father like a cat after fish, he did. Me and old Shermlock we used to hide things—candy and—and oranges—and let little Shermlock go and detect where they was. He was a great little codger, he was. And to think he's grewed up and gone into the detective work on his own hook. Well! Well! I'm glad you told me."

He noticed that Mr. Gubb was looking

at him sharply. He looked down at his ragged garments.

"Disguise," he said briefly. "Nobody'd know a swell dresser like I am in this rig, would he? Say, pard, how about giving me a half dollar to get breakfast? Us detectives ought to have *es-spirit dec corpse*, hey? We ought to stick by each other, hey?"

The celebrated paper-hanger-detective considered Chi Foxy. It was evident that P. Gubb doubted the authenticity of the tramp-detective.

"In times of necessary need," he said slowly, "I often assume onto me the disguise of a tramp, but not so far as what you do. I am working onto a case now which I'm a-going to go at more steadily as soon as I get this house papered up, and I assume the disguise of a tramp when needs be on that job, but I don't assume it onto me so hard that I go asking for money to buy breakfast."

"You don't, hey?" said Chi Foxy scornfully. "Well, you must be a swell detective, you must. How do you go disguised as a tramp? Do you get into your dirty rags and then hire a limmy-seen automobile and ride around town handin' out ten-dollar bills? That aint my way of detectin', that aint. When I get into a tramp disguise I'm a tramp all through."

"Most certainly," said P. Gubb. "And so do I. But there's a difference into the way you are doing it now. You aint deteckating now. You are coming at me as one detekative unto another. When I'm on a job of deteckating I'm all tramp. I'm a tramp because I don't want no one to know I'm I. But you aint pretending to be a tramp this immediate moment of time. You're pretend—you're a detekative, telling me you aint a tramp."

Chi Foxy laughed.

"Say," he said, "I'd like to see this here correspondence school you graduated out of, I would. I'd like to see the lessons they learn you, I would. Why, the first thing my old pard Shermlock Hollums told me was *never* to be anything but what I was disguised to be as long as I was disguised to be it. That's right. Maybe I'd be disguised as a tramp and I'd meet my old friend and college



chum, the Dook of Sluff. He'd say, 'Hello! you 'ere, ol' chap?' He'd want to take me into some swell place and blow me off to a swell dinner. Would I let on? No, sir! I'd sort of whine at him and say, 'Mister, wont you give a poor feller a penny for to hire a bed?' That's how me and Shermlock stuck to a disguise, and the Dook just like a brother to me. And Shermlock! Me and him was like twins, we was, and yet when I was in this tramp disguise and went up to his room to report I had to be a tramp just the same. I'd knock at the door and say 'Mister, give a poor cove a hand-out, wont you?' and Shermlock would turn and say, 'Watson, throw this tramp downstairs.' And Watson would do it. Yes, sir! I've been so sore and bruised from being thrown downstairs when I went to report to Shermlock that sometimes I couldn't report that day at all. I'd have to go to the hospital to get plastered up. That's detecting!"

Chi Foxy looked at P. Gubb, but P. Gubb did not seem to have melted.

"That's livin' up to your disguise," continued Chi Foxy. "Me and Shermlock, when we had on tramp disguises we *were* tramps. We were tramps all through. We were tramps as long as we had on a stitch or a hair of tramp disguise. You bet! Why, I used to go home and my valet would throw me downstairs. I was so thoroughly disguised, and I kept actin' so trampish while I had the disguise on, that he used to come at me with a golluf stick and whack me on the head. And I wouldn't say I was I. No, sir! I used to have to throw him out of the window before I could get into my own room. I used to use up five or six reg'lar French valets a month until I got a Rooshin one. He lasted better. He was tougher. He lasted two months and seven days. And when I had got into my own room I kept right on being a tramp. Took off my clothes—still a tramp. Took off my false whiskers—still a tramp. I'd be there stark naked and I'd still be a tramp. Yes, sir. That's the kind of detective disguising I did. And then I'd take a bath. Then I was myself again. Yes, sir. When I'd scrubbed myself in the bath-tub I

figured I'd got rid of the tramp disguise right down into the skin, and I'd be myself again—and stop throwin' valets out of windows."

He looked at P. Gubb out of the corner of his eye.

"Why, I remember one time," he said briskly. "I was asked to the Dook's palace to a swell party. Me and Shermlock was both asked, because they knew one of us wouldn't go unless the other did. Well, sir, I had been out detecting in a tramp disguise that day—findin' stolen jools and murderers and that sort of business—and I went and took my bath and rigged all up in swell clothes, and called my limmy-seen automobile, and when the feller I hired to drive the limmy-seen come to open the door of the car at the Dook's palace I dodged. Yes, sir, I dodged like I thought he was going to hit me because I hadn't no business in my own limmy-seen automobile. That was funny, wasn't it? So I went up the steps into the Dook's palace, and the gentleman he had to open the door opened the door, and he called out my name and up come the Dookess—Mrs. Dook of Sluff, as they call her, but I always called her Maggie, like she called me Mike. So she says to me, 'Mike, I'm mighty glad to see you here. We're going to have a swell party.' And I started to say back something pleasant, but what I said was, 'Please, missus, wont you give a poor cove a hand-out?'"

"What seemed to be the reason you said that?" asked Philo Gubb with interest.

"That's what worried me," said Chi Foxy. "I didn't mean to say it. I just said it against my will, as you might say. But I guess she thought I was tryin' to be smart, for she just says, 'Naughty, naughty, Mike,' and whistled to the Dook to come and blow me off to the feels. So the Dook come and led me into the dining-room, and stacked me up against the table for a stand-up feed. Swell feed, ho! Samwiches till you couldn't rest—ham samwiches and chicken samwiches and tongue samwiches and club samwiches and—and all kinds of samwiches. And what did I do? I grabbed half a dozen of them samwiches and rammed them into my pants pocket, just



"A deteckative like you are oughtn't to need twenty-five cents as bad as that," said P. Gubb.

like a tramp would do it. The Dook looked surprised, but he begun to haw-haw, and he slapped me on the back and said, "Good joke, ol' chap, good joke!" So that passed off all right. Then I went into the jool room, because the Dook had told me his son, the Dookette or what you might call the little Dookerino, was in there. So in I went, and the first thing I knew I was hiding one of the Dook's gold crowns inside my vest. In a minute in come the Dook to pick out a crown to wear at dinner—"

"I thought you said they had a stand-up dinner at the table," said Philo Gubb.

"Pshaw, that was nothing but the appetizer," said Chi Foxy. "Them nobles always does that or they couldn't afford to give as many parties as they do. They get the guests to fill up on samwiches and cheap food before dinner starts, and then the folks don't eat so much dinner. Well, in he come and began lookin' through his crowns for the one he wanted, and all at once he saw how my vest bulged out, and he knew by the rough

edges of the bulge it wasn't sandwiches because them dookal sandwiches is all boneless. So he puts his hand on my shoulder and he says, 'Mike, aint you carryin' the joke a bit too far?' That's what he says, and I wish you could have heard how sad his voice was. He says 'You know me, Mike, and you know that anything I've got is yours—*except* that crown you've got inside your vest.' And I knew why he was so sad about my taking that particular crown."

"Why?" asked Philo Gubb with interest.

"Because he had such high cheekbones," said Chi Foxy, "and when he chewed food the muscles would work up and down and you'd see them work his crown back on his head and back on his head and back on his head until pretty soon—*plunk!*—there would go the crown rolling on the floor. And that was annoying at a swell party. So he had had this crown made with the part above the muscles cut away, and he could wear it and feel safe in it—not have the blamed old thing falling all over the place. So he looked at me sad-like. For a minute I didn't know what to do. I wasn't in tramp disguise and I thought he would think I was a thief in real life, so I says, 'Dook, search me!' 'I don't have to search you,' he says, 'for I can see my favorite crown bulging out your vest.' 'I don't mean that, Dook, old chap,' I says; 'I mean take me up to your bood-u-war or the bathroom and give me the twice-over. Something's wrong with me, and I don't know what, but some of my tramp disguise must be sticking to me somewhere.' So we went up to the bathroom and he went over me with this one-eyed monocle he always wore, and then he went over me with a reading glass, and then he went over me with a microscope, but he couldn't see a speck of tramp disguise on me. Not a speck. 'Keep lookin'!' I says. 'It must be there somewhere, Dook,' I says, 'or I wouldn't act so pernicious.' So he begun again, and all at once I hear him chuckle. He was lookin' in my ear with the microscope."

"What was it?" asked Philo Gubb eagerly.

"A hair," said Chi Foxy. "Just one

hair. It was a hair out of my tramp whiskers that had got in my ear, and the minute he pulled it out I was all right again and no more tramp than he was. So you see that's the way I keep acting tramp as long as I have a hair of tramp disguise about me. Come on, be a good feller and let me have half a dollar to get some breakfast with."

P. Gubb put his hand in his pocket and withdrew it again.

"I much admire to like the way you act right up to the disguise," he said, "and it does you proud, but of course when you ask for fifty cents it's nothing but part of the disguise aint it? And you don't really want the fifty cents. For a minute I almost thought you did want it, you asked so tramp-like natural."

"Now, see here, bo!" said Chi Foxy earnestly. "Don't you go and misunderstand me. I didn't mean to be mistook that way. I *do* want fifty cents. I'm hungry. I am."

P. Gubb smiled approvingly.

"Most excellent trampish disguise work," he said. "Nobody couldn't do it better. A real tramp couldn't do it better."

Chi Foxy frowned.

"Say," he said, "cut that out, wont you, cully? Your head aint solid ivory, is it? I'm starvin'. Gimme fifty cents, mister. Gimme a quarter if you wont give me fifty. Come on now, be a good feller."

"A deteckative like you are oughtn't to need twenty-five cents so bad as that," said P. Gubb. "I guess you are just trying to show me how thorough you go into a disguise when you go into one. A deteckative acquainted with the knowing of a Dook and of Sherlock Holmes don't have to beg breakfast. You're trying to show how good you are at playing tramp. You're good."

Chi Foxy actually gritted his teeth. He was angry with himself. He had talked too well. He had talked so well he had talked himself out of a breakfast. He had proved so thoroughly that he was a detective that P. Gubb would not believe he was hungry.

"See here, bo," he said suddenly, "is this straight about you being a detective, or is it a bluff?"

Philo Gubb showed Chi Foxy the badge he had received upon completion of his correspondence course of twelve lessons.

"I'm the most celebrated and only detective in the town of Riverbank, Iowa," he said seriously, "and you can ask the sheriff or the chief of police if you don't believe me. I'm working right now onto a case of quite some importance, into which a calf was stolen, but up to now the clues aint what they should be. If you don't think I'm a detective you can ask Farmer Hopper. He hired me for to get the capture of the guilty calf-stealer aforesaid."

Chi Foxy studied P. Gubb's simple face.

"And you can arrest a feller and lodge him in jail?" he asked.

"I've arrested many and lodged them into jail," P. Gubb assured him.

"Well, bo," said Chi Foxy frankly, "I'm the man you're looking for. I'm as guilty as dirt. Arrest me."

The tramp knew enough about arrests to know that even a suspect, when lodged in jail, would be fed, and he was hungry and getting hungrier every moment. P. Gubb looked at him with immense surprise.

"I thought you said you was a detective," he said.

"I am," said Chi Foxy. "I'm one of the greatest in the world or I wouldn't know I was a criminal. I detected it myself, because nobody else could. Even my old friend Shermlock Hollums couldn't detect it, but I did. I'm a—a murderer, I am. There's a thousand-dollar reward offered for me."

"Then why don't you arrest yourself and get the reward?" asked P. Gubb.

"Say," said Chi Foxy with disgust, "you never heard of a detective arresting himself, did you? It can't be done. I know, for I've tried. I've grabbed myself and tried to take myself to jail, and as soon as I got hold of myself I break away from myself and run. No, bo, it can't be done. How do you think a swell detective like me would get to be so low he'd be begging a breakfast in a tall-grass town like this? Runnin' away from myself, that's how. I'm a fugitive, that's what I am. I'm a poor, chased, fright-

ened fugitive, fleeing everywhere to keep out of the clutches of the law. And right behind me, no matter where I flee to, comes myself ready to grab me and arrest me. That's the kind of a detective I am—when I get on a trail I never let up. I've chased myself all over Europe, Asia and Africa, and I can't get away from myself, and I can't grab myself. It's—it's just awful."

Chi Foxy wiped an imaginary tear from his eye.

"And I can't keep away from the scene of my crime," he said. "I come back here time after time—"

"Did you do the murder here?" asked P. Gubb with increased interest.

"That's what I did," said Chi Foxy. "I did it here. And back here I come, like criminals always do. And I'm weary tryin' to escape from myself, and I am ready right now to give myself up. Come ahead and arrest me for doin' that murder, and take me down to the lock-up. Me and you can hold me all right."

"It's somewhat out of the ordinary common run for a feller to be a detective and the criminal murderer he's chasing both at once," said P. Gubb doubtfully.

"That's so, aint it?" agreed Chi Foxy. "It looks that way. I can see how you'd naturally feel about it. You'd think it was out of the ordinary. I would myself, if anybody just told me that much. But facts are facts, aint they?"

"Quite occasionally they are such," agreed P. Gubb.

"That's right," said Chi Foxy. "And all you've got to do is to explain them. You see, bo, I was a young feller when I murdered this old miser—"

"What did you say his name was?" asked P. Gubb.

"Smith," said Chi Foxy promptly, "John J. Smith, and he lived right here in this town. I was a young feller, workin' for him, and I took an axe and killed him, and went off with his money. It was easy work. I was an amateur at the murder business, but I done it and got away and nobody suspected me. My name was—was Jones, Henry J. Jones. And I murdered the old feller and got away. Nobody cared much whether the old feller was murdered or not, and

nothin' much might have been said of it except that the old feller had a nephew. His name was Smith—Peter P. Smith."

"What did he do?" asked P. Gubb.

"He offered a reward of a thousand dollars," said Chi Foxy. "He was mad because somebody had murdered his poor old uncle and stole the money. So he offered the reward, and about a thousand detectives tried to find out who the murderer was, but they couldn't find out. It was a celebrated case, it was. It was one of them unsolved mystery cases—one of them cases that never gets solved because no detective is smart enough to solve it. Nobody knew who killed old John J. Smith but me, and I wasn't going around telling it."

"I should think not," said P. Gubb.

"No sir!" said Chi Foxy. "So I was as safe as a babe unborn. I skipped up the river to Minneapolis, and nobody thought of lookin' for me, because I wasn't suspected. And then I did a fool thing."

"Murderers 'most always does," said P. Gubb.

"Sure!" said Chi Foxy. "I thought I'd go to New Orleans. I thought I'd go down there and play the races and be a sport. So I got a steamboat ticket and started down river. It was all right—nice trip—until we got to Dubuque, and then what happened? The old steamer up and bust her boiler and blew up. I was sittin' on the top deck just over the boiler when she blew up, and she sent me higher than a kite. I went sailin' up in the air like one of these here skyrockets. I did, and when I come down I lit head first."

"It is a remarkable wonder it

didn't kill you to death," said P. Gubb.

"Aint it?" said Chi Foxy. "I've often thought just that thing myself. But it did worse than kill me. It knocked my senses out of me. When I come to I didn't know what had happened. I didn't remember a thing out of my past—not a thing. I was like a new-born babe. I didn't have an idea or a memory left in me. When they picked me up and I opened my eyes I could just say 'Ah-goo' and 'Da-da' and things like that, and I didn't know who I was or where I'd been or anything. So some kind folks took me and cured me up and sent me to kindergarden, and I started in to learn my A-B-C's and things like that. I learned fast, and pretty soon I was in the high school, and pretty soon I graduated, and the name I graduated under was Mike Higgs, Higgs being the name of the family that adopted me."

"Mike Higgs?" repeated P. Gubb, trying to remember a celebrated detective of that name.

"Yes," said Chi Foxy, "they named me Mike after the old gran'pa of the family. He was a butcher, and they wanted me to be a butcher when I grad-

uated from high school, but I'd been reading some detective books and I wanted to be a detective. So Gran'pa Higgs he lent me enough money to go to London and take lessons in detecting from Shermlock Hollums, and I did. He charged me five dollars a lesson, but it was worth it. He says to me, when I'd finished the course, 'Mike, I hate to say it, but I can't call you a rival. You're so far ahead of me in detective knowledge that I'm like a half-witted child



Mr. Gubb looked at it. It was indeed a skull.

beside you.' That's what my old friend and teacher, Shermlock Hollums, says to me."

"That was exceedingly high praising from one so largely great," said P. Gubb.

"You bet it was!" said Chi Foxy. "So I went to work and did some detective work, just to get my hand in, and one day Shermlock says to me, 'Mike you're so good at this detecting work, why don't you try to solve The Great Mystery?'"

"What's that?" I says.

"Why, the greatest unsolved mystery of the world," he says. "The mystery of the Riverbank, Iowa, miser."

"So he told me what he knew about it," continued Chi Foxy, "and I liked the idea of solving the mystery no other detectives could solve, and I set to work. I come here to Riverbank to hunt up a clue, and I found just one clue."

"What was it?" asked Philo Gubb.

"It was a speck of red pepper no bigger than the point of a pin," said Chi Foxy. "It took me three weeks, going over the premises of the old miser with a microscope, to find it, and another man would never have given it a thought. It was crushed into the carpet by the old miser's bed, where he had been killed. I picked up the speck of red pepper and microscoped it, and I saw that along one edge it was sort of brown, and when I looked close I saw that that was where it had been burned a little. Nothin' but a little speck of red pepper burned along one edge."

"Have you got it now?" asked P. Gubb.

"Got it?" said Chi Foxy. "I should say not. While I was lookin' at it a breeze come and blowed it away, and I never saw it again, but that was enough for me. 'Red pepper,' I says, 'partly burned,' and I began to tremble. 'Cause why? 'Cause I never was able to get smoking tobacco strong enough to suit me, and to make it taste snappy I always put a little red pepper in my tobacco. Always! I turned as white as a sheet. 'Red pepper partly burned!' I says to myself. 'Nobody in the world but me puts red pepper in his tobacco.' I was found stunned from falling head first on

a rock. Who was I before I hit that rock?"

"Well, sir, I started tracing myself back from the minute when I found that speck of red pepper, and I traced myself back to where I had hit the rock. I traced the blowed-up steamer back to Minneapolis. I sleuthed around Minneapolis until I found a tobacco store where they knew of a young man that used to mix red pepper in his tobacco. I found out his name was Jones—Henry J. Jones. I asked if there was any way they could remember him, and the man said, 'If I was to say my mind, I'd say you was Henry J. Jones growed a little older, but there's one sure way of telling. Henry J. Jones has a wreath of forget-me-nots tattooed on his left wrist.' I pulled up my cuff and there it was! I was myself, and I was the murderer, and I was the detective after the murderer. I was everybody concerned. In a moment I was overcome by criminal fear and I fled. I fled all over Europe, Asia and Africa, and wherever I went I was right after myself, ready to arrest me."

Chi Foxy paused and glanced at P. Gubb questioningly. With a solemn face the great correspondence-school detective blinked his bird-like eyes at Chi Foxy. He was deeply impressed. He had no doubt that Chi Foxy had told the truth. Such strange happenings are found in almost every detective story.

"So now arrest me," said Chi Foxy.

Philo Gubb rubbed his chin.

"I'd like to favor you by so doing, Mr. Jones," he said, "for I can easy see, Mr. Higgs, that you can't arrest yourself, but it is against the instructions in Lesson Six of the Rising Sun Correspondence School of Detectkating for a graduate to arrest a man without a good clue, and the only clue you had was blowed away."

For a moment this seemed to annoy Chi Foxy, but his face suddenly brightened.

"Clue?" he said. "Say, friend, I wouldn't ask you to arrest me on any such clue as a speck of red pepper. No, sir! But I've got a clue that'll mean something. I can tell you right where I buried that old miser's bones, I can. You go up the river road until you come

to a tool-house on the railway, and just back of the tool-house is a dwellin' house—old and unpainted. All right! Right in that yard, close to the railway fence, the bones is buried. Now, you turn me over to the law, and you go up there—"

"We'd best go up there immediately first before anything else," said Philo Gubb, starting to remove his paper-hanger's apron. "Putting off clues until sometime else is against Paragraph 4, Lesson One. If you come up there with me—"

"Look here," said Chi Foxy, "will you buy me a breakfast on the way up if I go with you?"

"Quite certainly sure," said P. Gubb, and so it was agreed. The paper-hanger-detective and the criminal-detective stopped at Hank's restaurant and Chi Foxy ate a heavy meal, and then Chi Foxy led the way to the railway. He led Philo Gubb to the tool-house, and pointed over the wire fence to the spot where the bones of the murdered miser were supposed to repose.

"Right there!" he said, and when P. Gubb had climbed the fence and had turned to look for Chi Foxy, the late detective-criminal was gone. He had disappeared over the railway embankment. Mr. Gubb's face turned red. He stood like a badly fooled and shamed flamingo, but as he hung his head in shame his eyes noticed that the ground at his feet had lately been spaded. He stooped to look at it, and then walked to the weather-beaten house and knocked. A lanky, loose-jointed man came to the door, and a woman peered at Mr. Gubb from behind the man.

"I hope you'll pardon my excuse," said Mr. Gubb politely, "but my name is P. Gubb, detectakive and paper-hanger, and I'm looking up a case. Might I trouble you for the loan of a spade or shovel?"

"What you want with it?" asked the man gruffly.

"I'm lookin' up the murder of a miser that was murdered," said Mr. Gubb, and the man seemed relieved. He laughed and handed Mr. Gubb a spade on which there were still traces of soft, sandy soil. Mr. Gubb walked to the rear of the yard and jabbed the spade into the soft soil. It struck something hard. In a moment or two Mr. Gubb had the evidences of crime completely uncovered. There were bones buried there—many bones. Mr. Gubb looked up and wiped his brow. Then he looked down at the bones. One was a skull. Mr. Gubb stared at it. It was indeed a skull, but it was the skull of a calf. All the bones were calf bones—not bones of the human calf or lower leg, but bones of the veal calf. Mr. Gubb turned his head and saw the long, lanky man approaching.

"All right," said the long, lanky man, "I give up. You've got me. I surrender. When a detective gets that close, a man hasn't any chance. I own up. I did it."

"You did what?"

"Now, quit!" said the long, lanky man. "No use rubbin' it in after I've owned up. You know as well as I do—I'm the man that stole Farmer Hopper's calf. I give up. I surrender."

"I'm much obliged to you," said Philo Gubb.

"Well, I aint obliged to *you*," said the lanky man, "but I wish you'd tell me how you found out I was the calf thief."

Mr. Gubb smiled an inscrutable smile.

"A detectakive don't spend time and money being learned the Twelve Complete Lessons in Detectakating of the Rising Sun Correspondence School of Detectakating without acquiring dexterity in the way of capturing up the criminal classes," he said with oracular yet modest simplicity.

**Next month: "Philo Gubb's Greatest Case!"**





He watched Mrs. Betty with keen curiosity and wonder.

**The Story:** *Hepsey Burke is a feminine David Harum, and her story is written by the brother of the man who originated the lovable and amusing David.*

*When Donald Maxwell, a young minister from the city, comes to Durford, Hepsey takes him under her wing. She teaches him how to milk a Jersey cow, and warns him to be on his guard with the despotic and wealthy Senior Warden, Sylvester Bascom, whose daughter Virginia leads "society" and has been trying for years to marry one of the succeeding ministers. Virginia tries smiles and "good" works on Maxwell till the parish is all agog.*

*But the young rector marries a girl in his home city, and when he brings his bride to the little Durford parish house, Virginia ignores her, and plans trouble. Hepsey has beautified the parish house after her own maxim—"It's easy enough to get along without most of the necessities, but one must have some of the luxuries."*

*Soon Virginia's bomb falls. Her father serves notice on Maxwell to vacate the parish house, and holds up his salary. Hepsey promises Maxwell ominously that she'll take her knitting to Bascom's office and "sit awhile." But Maxwell begs her first to let him try to deal with Bascom.*

*He moves to a tent on the parish lot. Bascom orders him off church property and continues to hold up his salary. Maxwell refuses to be driven out and works as a road-mender to earn enough to live on. Bascom is furious, but before he can make another move he is seriously hurt and Maxwell gives his blood for transfusion to save the old man's life.*

*Meanwhile Hepsey has promised to marry the Junior Warden, Jonathan Jackson.*

## HEPSEY BURKE

A NOVEL OF A DAVID HARUM IN PETTICOATS

By Frank N. Westcott

ILLUSTRATED BY FREDERICK R. GRUGER

**I**N about twenty minutes Maxwell came out of the invalid's room, assisted by Doctor Field, and stretched himself on the bed.

Bascom's color began slowly to return; his pulse quickened, and Doctor Field remarked to his colleague:

"Well, I think the old chap is going to pull through after all; but it was a mighty close squeak."

Meanwhile, the messenger who had been sent out to Willow Bluff to apprise Virginia of her father's accident returned with the information that Virginia had left the day before, to stay

with friends, and could not possibly get home till next day. It was decided to telegraph for her; and in the meantime the doctors advised that Mr. Bascom be left quietly in his bed at the new "rectory," and he moved home next day, after having recovered some of his lost strength. Mrs. Betty and Mrs. Burke took turns in watching by the invalid that night, and it might have been observed that his eyes remained closed, even when he did not sleep, while Mrs. Burke was in attendance, but that he watched Mrs. Betty with keen curiosity and wonder, from between half-closed lids, as she sat at the foot of his bed sewing, or

moved about noiselessly preparing the nourishment prescribed for him by the doctors, and which the old gentleman took from her with unusual gentleness and patience.

It was Mrs. Burke who, having learned of the time when Virginia was expected to return home, drove out to Willow Bluff with Mr. Bascom, and assisted in making him comfortable there before his daughter's arrival. He volunteered no word on their way thither, but lay back among his cushions and pillows with closed eyes, pale and exhausted—though the doctors assured the Maxwells that there was no cause for anxiety on the score of his removal, when they urged that he be left in their care until he had regained more strength.

It was a white and scared Virginia who listened to Hepsey's account of all that had happened—an account which neither over-stated the Bascoms' debt to the Maxwells nor spared Virginia's guilty conscience.

When she found that her father had been the guest of the Maxwells and that they had played the part of good Samaritans to him in the tent in which the Senior Warden had obliged them to take refuge, she was thoroughly mortified, and there was a struggle between false pride and proper gratitude.

"It is very awkward, is it not, Mrs. Burke?" she said. "I ought certainly to call on Mrs. Maxwell and thank her—but—under the circumstances—"

"What circumstances?" asked Hepsey.

"Well, you know, it will be very embarrassing for me to go to Mr. Maxwell's tent after what has happened between him and—my father."

"I'm not sure that I catch on, Virginia. Which happenin' do you mean? Your father's cold-blooded ejection of the Maxwells from their house, or Mr. Maxwell's warm-blooded sacrifice to save your father's life? Perhaps it is a bit embarrassing, as you call it, to thank a man for givin' his blood to save your father."

"It is a more personal matter than that," replied Virginia, gazing dramatically out of the window. "You don't quite seem to appreciate the delicacy of the situation, Mrs. Burke."

"No, I'm blessed if I do. But then you know I'm very stupid about some things, Virginia. Fact is I'm just stupid enough to imagine—no, I mean think—that it would be the most natural thing in the world to go straight to the Maxwells and thank 'em for all they've done for your father in takin' him in and givin' him the kind of care that money can't buy. There's special reasons that I needn't mention why you should say thank you, and say it right."

Virginia examined the toe of her boot for some time in silence and then began:

"But you don't understand the situation, Mrs. Burke."

"Virginia, if you don't stop that kind of thing, I shall certainly send for the police. Are you *lookin'* for a situation? If you have got anything to say, say it."

"Well, to be quite frank with you, Mrs. Burke, I must confess that at one time Mr. Maxwell and I were supposed to be very good friends."

"Naturally. You ought to be good friends with your rector. I don't see anything tragic about that."

"But we were something more than friends."

"Who told you? You can't believe all you hear in a town like this. Maybe some one was foolin' you."

"I ought to know what I am talking about. He accepted our hospitality at Willow Bluff, and was so attentive that people began to make remarks."

"Well, people have been makin' remarks ever since Eve told Adam to put his apron on for dinner. Any fool can make remarks, and the biggest fool is the one who cares. Are you sure that you didn't make any remarks yourself, Virginia?"

Virginia instantly bridled, and looked the picture of injured innocence.

"Certainly not!" she retorted. "Do you think that I would talk about such a delicate matter before others?"

"Oh no; I suppose not. But you could look wise and foolish at the same time when Maxwell's name was mentioned, with a coy and kittenish air which would suggest more than ten volumes of Mary Jane Holmes."

"You are not very sympathetic, Mrs. Burke, when I am in deep trouble. I

want your help, not ridicule and abuse."

"Well, I am sorry for you, Virginia, in more ways than one. But really I'd like to know what reason you have to think that Donald Maxwell was ever in love with you; I suppose that's what you mean."

Virginia blushed deeply, as became a gentle maiden of her tender years, and replied:

"Oh, it is not a question of things which one can easily define. Love is vocal without words, you know."

"Hm! You don't mean that he made love to you and proposed to you through a phonograph? You know I had some sort of idea that love that was all wool, and a yard wide, and meant business, usually got vocal at times."

"But Mr. Maxwell and I were thrown together in such an intimate way in parish work, you know."

"Which did the throwing?"

"You don't for one moment suppose that I would intrude myself, or press myself on his attention, do you?"

"Oh my gracious, no! He is not the kind of a man to be easily impressed. He may have seen a girl or two before he met you; of course I mean just incidentally, as it were. Now, Virginia Bascom, allow me to ask you one or two plain questions. Did he ever ask you to marry him?"

"No, not in so many words."

"Did he ever give you any plain indication that he wanted to marry you? Did he ever play the mandolin under your window at midnight? Did he ever steal one of your gloves, or beg for a rose out of your bouquet, or turn the gas out when he called?"

"No, but one night he sat on the sofa with me and told me that I was a great assistance to him in his parish work, and that he felt greatly indebted to me."

"Hm! that's certainly rather pronounced, isn't it? Did you call your father, or rise hastily and leave the room, or what did you do?"

"Well, of course it was not a proposal, but the way he did it was very suggestive, and calculated to give a wrong impression, especially as he had his arm on the back of the sofa behind me."

"Maybe he was makin' love to the

sofa. Didn't you know that Donald Maxwell was engaged to be married before he ever set foot in Durford?"

"Good gracious, no! What are you talking about?"

"Well, he certainly was, for keeps."

"Then he had no business to pose as a free man, if he were engaged. It is dreadful to have to lose faith in one's rector. It is next to losing faith in—

in—"

"The milk-man. Yes, I quite agree with you. But you see I don't recall that Donald Maxwell did any posing. He simply kept quiet about his own affairs—though I do think that it would have been better to let people know that he was engaged, from the start. However, he may have concluded his private affairs were his own business. I know that's very stupid; but some people will persist in doin' it, in spite of all you can say to 'em. Perhaps it never occurred to him that he would be expected to marry anyone living in a little sawed-off settlement like this."

"There's no use in abusing your native village; and"—her voice quavered on the verge of tears—"I think you are very unsympathetic." She buried her nose in her handkerchief.

Mrs. Burke gazed sternly at Virginia for a full minute and then inquired:

"Well, do you want to know why? You started with just foolishness, but you've ended up with meanness, Virginia Bascom. You've taken your revenge on people who've done you nothin' but kindness. I know pretty well who it was that suggested to your father that the mortgage on the rectory should be foreclosed, and the Maxwells turned out of house and home. He's always been close-fisted, but I've never known him to be dead ugly and vindictive before."

"Yes. You were behind all this wretched business—and you're sorry for it, and wish you could undo the unkindness you've done. Now I am goin' to talk business—better than talkin' sympathy, because it'll make you feel better when you've done what I tell you. You go and call on Mrs. Betty immediately, and tell her that you are very grateful to her husband for saving your father's life, and that money couldn't possibly pay

for the things she and Mr. Maxwell did for him, and that you're everlastingly indebted to 'em both."

"But—but," wailed the repentant Virginia, "what can I say about the tent? Pa wont go back on that—not if his life had been saved twice over."

"Never you mind about that. You do your part of the business, and leave the rest to the other feller. You can bet your bottom dollar it wont be the Maxwells that'll raise the question of who turned 'em out of the rectory."

"I'll go right away, before I weaken. Oh," she cried, as Hepsey put a strengthening arm about her, "I've been wrong—I know I have. However shall I make it right again?"

WHEN Virginia arrived at the tent and pulled the bell-cord, Mrs. Betty pushed apart the curtains and greeted her visitor with the utmost cordiality.

"Oh, Miss Bascom! I am *so* glad to see you. Come right in. Donald is out just now; but he will return presently, and I'm sure will be delighted to see an old friend. This way, please. Is your father improving satisfactorily?"

This greeting was so utterly different from what she had expected, that for the moment she was silent; but when they were seated she began:

"Mrs. Maxwell, I don't know how to express my gratitude to you for all you have done for my father. I—I—"

"Then I wouldn't try, Miss Bascom. Don't give the matter a single thought. We were glad to do what we could for your father, and we made him as comfortable as we could."

Virginia's heart was quite atrophied, and so with choking voice she began:

"And I'm afraid that I have not been very civil to you—in fact, I am sure that I owe you an apology—"

"No, never mind. It's all right now. Suppose you take off your things and stay to supper with us. Then we can have a real good visit, and you will see how well we dwellers in tents can live!"

Virginia winced; but for some reason which she could not understand she found it quite impossible to decline the invitation.

"I'm sure you are very kind, Mrs. Maxwell; but I'm afraid I shall inconvenience you."

"Oh no, not a bit. Now will you be a real good Samaritan and help me a little, as I have no maid? You might set the table if you don't mind, and when Donald comes we shall be ready for him. This is really quite jolly," she added, bustling about, showing Virginia where to find things.

"I am afraid," Virginia began with something like a sob in her voice, "that you are heaping coals of fire on my head."

"Oh no; not when coal is over seven dollars a ton. We couldn't afford such extravagant hospitality as that. You might arrange those carnations in the vase if you will, while I attend to the cooking. You will find the china, and the silver, in that chest. I wont apologize for the primitive character of our entertainment because you see when we came down here we stored most of our things in Mrs. Burke's barn. It is awfully nice to have somebody with me; I am so much alone; you came just in time to save me from the blues."

When Mrs. Betty disappeared in the "kitchen," and Virginia began the task assigned her, a very queer and not altogether pleasant sensation filled her heart. Was it remorse, or penitence, or self-reproach, or indigestion? She could not be absolutely sure about it, but concluded that perhaps it was a combination of all four. When Donald returned, and discovered Virginia trying to decide whether they would need two spoons or three at each plate, for an instant he was too astonished to speak; but quickly regaining his easy manner, he welcomed her no less cordially than Mrs. Betty had done, remarking:

"Well, this is a treat; and so you are going to have supper with us. That will be a great pleasure."

Virginia almost collapsed in momentary embarrassment, and could think of nothing better than to ask:

"I am not sure what Mrs. Maxwell is going to have for supper, and I really don't know whether to place two spoons or three. What would you advise, Mr. Maxwell?"

Maxwell scowled seriously, rubbed his chin and replied:

"Well, you know, I really can't say; but perhaps it would be on the safe side to have three spoons in case any emergency might arise, like a custard, or jelly and whipped cream, or something else which Betty likes to make as a surprise. Yes, on the whole, I think that three would be better than two."

When Virginia had placed the spoons, and Maxwell had returned to assist her, she hesitated a moment and looked at him with tears in her eyes and began:

"Mr. Maxwell, there is something I must say to you, an acknowledgment and an apology I must make. I have been so horribly—"

"Now see here, Miss Virginia," the Rector replied, "you just forget it. We are awfully glad to have you here, and we are going to have a right jolly supper together. Betty's muffins are simply fine, and her creamed chicken is a dream. Besides, I want to consult you concerning the new wardrobe I am going to have built in the vestry. You see there is the question of the drawers, and the shelves, and—"

"Never mind the drawers and the shelves," Mrs. Betty remarked as she entered with the creamed chicken and the muffins. "You just sit down before these things get cold, and you can talk business afterwards."

To her utter astonishment Virginia soon found herself eating heartily, utterly at her ease in the cordial, friendly atmosphere of tent-life, and when Maxwell took her home later in the evening, she hadn't apologized or wallowed in an agony of self-reproach. She had only demanded the recipe for the muffins, and had declared that she was coming again very soon if Mrs. Betty would only let her.

And last but not least—the Rector's polite attention in acting as her escort home failed to work upon her dramatic temperament with any more startling effect than to produce a feeling that he was her very good friend.

In fact, she wondered, as she conned over the events of the evening, whether she had realized before, all that the word *Friendship* signified.

## CHAPTER XXII

### HEPSEY'S DIPLOMACY

"I DON'T rightly know what's got into Virginia Bascom," remarked Jonathan, as he sat on Hepsey's side porch one evening, making polite conversation as his new habit was. "She's buzzin' round Mrs. Betty like a bee round a flower—thicker'n thieves they be, by gum."

"Yes," cogitated Hepsey, half to herself, and half in response, "the lamb's lyin' down all right, and it's about time we'd got the lion curled up by her and purrin' like a cat. But I don't see the signs of it, and I guess I'll have to take my knittin' to-morrow and sit right down in his den and visit with him a little. If he wont purr, I've got what'll make him roar, good and proper, or I've missed my guess."

"Now Hepsey, you go easy with my church-partner, the Senior Warden. When his wife lived, he was a decent sort of a feller, was Sylvester Bascom; and I reckon she got him comin' her way more with molasses than with vinegar."

And though Hepsey snorted contempt for the advice of a mere male, she found the thought top-side of her mind as she started out next morning to pay Bascom a momentous call. After all, Jonathan had but echoed her own consistent philosophy of life. But with her usual shrewdness she decided to go armed with both kinds of ammunition.

Mrs. Burke puffed somewhat loudly as she paused on the landing which led to the door of Bascom's office. After wiping her forehead with her handkerchief she gave three loud knocks on the painted glass of the door, which shook some of the loose putty onto the floor. After knocking the third time some one called out "Come in," and she opened the door, entered, and gazed calmly across the room. Bascom was seated at his desk talking to a farmer, and when he turned around and discovered who his visitor was, he ejaculated irreverently:

"Good Lord deliver us!"

"Oh, do excuse me!" Mrs. Burke replied. "I didn't know that you were sayin' the Litany. I'll just slip into the

next room and wait till you get through."

Whereupon she stepped into the next room, closed the door, and made herself comfortable in a large arm-chair. There was a long table in the middle of the room, and the walls were covered with shelves and yellow books of a most monotonous binding. The air was musty and close. She quietly opened one of the windows, and having resumed her seat, she pulled a wash-rag from her leather bag and began knitting calmly.

She waited for some time, occasionally glancing at the long table, which was covered with what appeared to be a hopeless confusion of letters, legal documents, and books opened and turned face downward. Occasionally she sniffed in disgust at the general untidiness of the place. Evidently the appearance of the table in front of her was getting on her nerves; and so she put her knitting away as she muttered to herself:

"I wonder Virginia don't come up here once in a while and put things to rights. It's simply awful!" Then she began sorting the papers and gathering them into little uniform piles by themselves. She seemed to have no notion whatever of their possible relation to each other, but arranged them according to their size and color in nice little separate piles. When there was nothing else left for her to do she resumed her knitting and waited patiently for the departure of the farmer. The two men seemed to be having a rather warm dispute over the interpretation of some legal contract; and if Bascom was hot-tempered and emphatic in his language, bordering on the profane, the client was stubborn and dull-witted and hard to convince. Occasionally she overheard bits of the controversy which were not intended for her ears. Bascom insisted:

"But you're not such a dum fool as to think that a contract legally made between two parties is not binding, are you? You admit that I have fulfilled my part, and now you must pay for the services rendered or else I shall bring suit against you."

The reply to this was not audible, but the farmer did not seem to be quite convinced.

AFTER what seemed to her an interminable interval the door banged, and she knew that Bascom was alone. She did not wait for any invitation, but rising quietly she went into the inner office and took the chair vacated by the farmer. Bascom made a pretense of writing, in silence, with his back towards her, during which interval Hepsey waited patiently. Then, looking up with the expression of a deaf-mute, he asked colorlessly:

"Well, Mrs. Burke, what may I do for you?"

"You can do nothing for me—but you can and must do something for the Maxwells," she replied firmly but quietly.

"Don't you think it would be better to let Maxwell take care of his own affairs?"

"Yes, most certainly, if he were in a position to do so. But you know that the clergy are a long-sufferin' lot, more's the pity; they'll endure almost anythin' rather than complain. That's why you and others take advantage of them."

"Ah, but an earnest minister of the Gospel does not look for the loaves and fishes of his calling."

"I shouldn't think he would. I hate fish, myself; but Maxwell has a perfect right to look for the honest fulfillment of a contract made between you and him. Didn't I hear you tell that farmer that he was a dum fool if he thought that a contract made between two parties is not legally binding, and that if you fulfilled your part he must pay for your services or you would sue him? Do you suppose that a contract with a carpenter or a plumber or a mason is binding, while a contract with a clergyman is not? What is the matter with you, anyway?"

Bascom made no reply, but turned his back towards Hepsey and started to write. She resumed:

"Donald Maxwell's salary is goin' to be paid him in full within the next two weeks or—"

Mrs. Burke came to a sudden silence, and after a moment or two Bascom turned around and inquired sarcastically:

"Or what?"

Hepsey continued to knit in silence for a while, her face working in her



effort to gain control of herself and speak calmly.

"Now see here, Sylvester Bascom: I didn't come here to have a scene with you, and if I knit like I was fussed, you must excuse me."

Her needles had been flashing lightning, and truth to tell, Bascom, for all he dreaded Hepsey's sharp tongue as nothing else in Durford, had been unable to keep his eyes off those angry bits of sparkling steel. Suddenly they stopped—dead. The knitting fell into Hepsey's lap, and she sat forward—a pair of kindly, moist eyes searching the depths of Bascom's, as he looked up at her. Her voice dropped to a lower tone as she continued:

"There's been just one person, and one person only, that's ever been able to keep the best of you on top—and she was my best friend, your wife. She kept you human, and turned even the worst side of you to some account. If you did scrape and grub, 'most night and day, to make your pile, and was hard on those that crossed your path while doin' of it, it was she that showed you there was pleasure in usin' it for others as well as for yourself, and while she lived you did it. But since she's been gone,"—the old man tried to keep his face firm and his glance steady, but in vain—he winced,—“since she's been gone, the human in you's dried up like a sun-baked apple. And it's you, Sylvester Bascom, that's been made the most miserable, 'spite of all the little carks you've put on many another."

His face hardened again, and Hepsey paused.

"What has all this to do with Mr. Maxwell, may I ask?"

"I'm comin' to that," continued Hepsey, patiently. "If Mary Bascom were alive to-day, would the rector of Durford be livin' in a tent instead of in the rectory—the house she thought she had given over, without mortgage or anything else, to the church? And would you be holdin' back your subscription to the church, and seein' that others held back too? I never thought you'd have done, when she was dead, what'd have broken her heart if she'd been livin'. The church was her one great interest in life, after

her husband and her daughter; and it was *her* good work that brought the parish to make you Senior Warden. After you'd made money and moved to your new house, just before she died, she gave the old house, that was hers from her father, to the church, and you were to make the legal transfer of it. Then she died suddenly, and you delayed and delayed—claiming the house as yours, and at last sold it to us subject to the mortgage."

The old man stirred uneasily in his chair.

"This is all quite beside the mark. What might have been proper to do in my wife's life-time became a different matter altogether after her death. I had my daughter's welfare to think of; besides—"

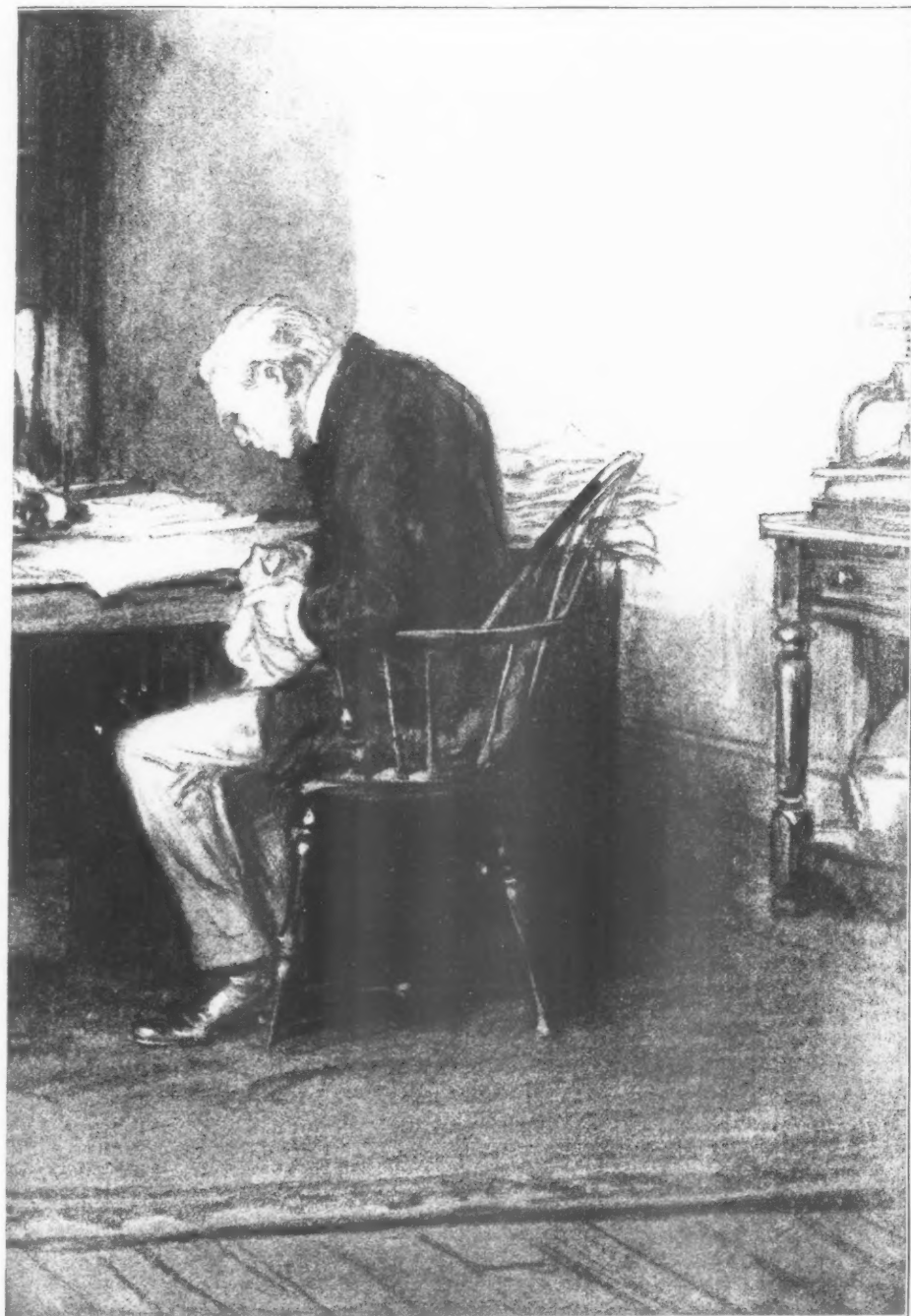
"I'm not talkin' about your legal right. But you know that if you'd wanted to have it, you could have got your interest on the mortgage quick enough. If you hadn't held back on his salary, others wouldn't have; or if they had, you could have got after 'em. What's the use of tryin' to mix each other up? You couldn't keep Maxwell in your pocket, and because he didn't come to you every day for orders you reckoned to turn him out of the parish. You've not one thing against him, and you know it, Sylvester Bascom. He's shown you every kind of respect as his Senior Warden, and more patience than you deserved. He let himself be—no, *had* himself—bled, to save your life. But instead of making him the best young friend you could have had, and makin' yourself of real use to your town and your neighbors through him and his work, you've let the devil get into you; and when your accident come, you'd got to where you were runnin' that fast down a steep place into the sea that I could 'most hear the splash."

She cocked her head on one side, and smiled at him whimsically, hoping for some response to her humorous picture. A faint ghost of a smile—was it, or was it not?—flickered on the old man's lips; but he gave no sign of grace.

Hepsey sighed, and paused for an instant. "Well—we can't sit here talkin' till midnight, or I shall be compromisin' your reputation, I suppose. There'll be a meeting of the parishioners called at the



Opening her bag and rummaging about among its contents, she hit upon a letter and brought it forth. "I don't be-



lieve I'll have to say a thing. I've got a hunch, Sylvester Bascom, that it'll be you that'll have the last word, after all."

end of this week, and the Rector wont be present at it; so, Warden, I suppose you'll preside. I hope you will. I've got to do my part—and that is to see that the parish understands just how their rector's placed, right now, both about his house and his salary. He's workin' as a laborer to get enough for him and that little wife of his to live on, and the town knows it—but they don't all know that it's because the salary that's properly his is bein' held back on him, and by those that pay their chauffeurs more than the Rector gets, by a good piece. I shall call on every one at that meetin' to pay up; and I shall begin with the poorest, and end up"—she fixed Bascom's eye, significantly—"with the richest. And if it seems to be my duty to do it, I may have somethin' more to say when the subscription's closed—but I don't believe—no," she added, opening her bag and rummaging about among its contents till she hit upon a letter and brought it forth, "no, I don't believe I'll have to say a thing. I've got a hunch, Sylvester Bascom, that it'll be you that'll have the last word, after all."

The old man's glance was riveted upon the familiar handwriting of the faded letter, and without a word Hepsey started to read it, date and all, in a clear voice:

WILLOW BLUFF, DUNFORD,  
September —, 19—.

Hepsey dear:

I suppose you will never forgive me for making the move from the old

house to Willow Bluff, as it's to be called, while you were not home to help me. But they got finished sooner than we thought for, and Sylvester was as eager as a child with a new toy to get moved in. So here we are, and the first letter I write from our new home is to you, who helped more than anyone to make the old home happy for me and mine—bless them and bless you!

Everything is out of the old house—"The Rectory" as I shall call it, now—except such pieces of furniture as we did not want to take away, and we thought might be welcome to the parson (or parsons, I suppose) who may occupy it. Sister Susan thought it slighting to Pa's generosity to give the house to the church; but I don't look at it like that. Anyway, it's done now—and I'm very happy to think that the flock can offer a proper home to its shepherd, as long as the old place stands.

If you get back Thursday I shall just be ready for you to help me with the shades and curtains, if you care to.

Your friend,

MARION ANDERSON BASCOM.  
P.S. 'Ginty sends her love to Aunt Hepsey, and says "to come to Boston quick!" She's a little confused, somehow, and can't get it out of her head that we're not back home in Boston, since we left the old place. I hope you are having a nice visit with Sally.

As Hepsey read, Sylvester Bascom turned, slowly, away from her, his head on his hand, gazing out of the window. When she had finished reading, the letter was folded up and replaced in the bag along with her knitting. Then, laying her hand with a gentle, firm pressure on the old man's shoulder, Mrs. Burke departed.

**The final installment of "Hepsey Burke" will be in the April issue of The Red Book Magazine, on the news-stands March 23rd.**

The puppy arrived at a gallop



ILLUSTRATED BY  
RICHARD CULTER

**I**T WAS all done very nicely and politely, but the Brigade de Sûreté left no doubt of its opinion of Mulberry Street, and Mulberry Street, justly hurt, neatly paraphrased into smooth official terms the retort that the whole of the French detective service was not worth a hill of beans.

Now this regrettable interchange of amenities between two great criminal investigation bureaux could not have arisen had they not both been a little strained by outside influences. It was a little matter of forgery. There had been an import of forged French notes of exquisite workmanship, and the Brigade de Sûreté had convinced themselves that the point of origination was in the United States. Mulberry Street was approached in form to "see to it."

It so happened that Mulberry Street was very busy. It pointed out to its French confrère that New York was a big place, and the United States a bigger. Wouldn't it be as well for the Brigade de Sûreté to catch the swindlers who were actually passing the notes. The Brigade de Sûreté replied that this has been attempted—vainly. "The matter shall have our attention," said Mulberry Street, and detailed two men who for a time made things extremely uncomfortable for persons who might rea-

# The Mayor's Daughter

*THE adventures of a visitor from Scotland Yard.*

By Frank Froest

Author of "The Crime Club," etc.



sonably be supposed to have leanings towards syndicated crime.

The Chef de Sûreté, stirred thereto by reports that notes were still being negotiated and longing for some one to kick, dictated the note already referred to, and the Assistant Commissioner of New York's police, also pleased to kick, made his reply. So a stimulant to efforts on both sides of the Atlantic was afforded.

Then it was that Grenfell of New Scotland Yard, London, who had been sent over to arrange the extradition of an embezzler, happened into Mulberry Street, and to him as an unprejudiced and sympathetic outsider many people opened their souls.

The kick administered by the Brigade de Sûreté had been passed on after due reflection to Detective-Sergeant McFall, who, pining for a kind word, met Grenfell as he was coming down the steps from the Assistant Commissioner's office.

"Hello, you?" he exclaimed, thrusting out a heavy fist. "How'd you find the boss? Did y' mention forgery to him?"

"No. He did all the mentioning," said Grenfell.

McFall fell into step with him and spat viciously. "Hell's an ice-box to the Chief when he gets going," he said, with a touch of admiration. "He had Gann and me up this morning, and you may

have noticed the scorch marks on the carpet where he frizzled us. Yes, we were burnt offerings all right by the time he was through. He told you that some one was handing out bad paper in France, I suppose?"

Grenfell slapped him on the back. "Come and have a tonic," he said.

They had a tonic. They had two. And on the second McFall spoke more freely. He was feeling bitter because he had been unjustly blamed. He was an able man, and it was because of his ability that he had been one of the two selected to unearth the forgers. "Tisn't as if we had anything to work on," he declared. "We've had a line on every crook in little old New York and we've pulled a dozen if we've pulled one. The stuff goes over by mail but we've kept our eyes on the letters sent out by every likely bird. None of the boys is in it—that I'll swear."

"How do you know they go out by mail?" asked Grenfell.

McFall lifted his shoulders. "Same way as the French people know the stuff comes from here. There was a package at Rennes—R. J. Tupper, Poste Restante—New York post-mark—type-written address—fifty one-hundred-franc notes inside and nothing else. No one ever called for them and they were handed over to the police. That's how, Now"—he smashed a fist down on the counter—"the chief he says, 'I want you to find out who's marketing the dope, and to find out quick.' And because I can't work miracles I get it in the neck—some," he concluded bitterly.

The Central Detective Bureau of New York is a wonderfully efficient body, and it expects its men to be efficient. It does not like excuses. Like all police bodies it has a keen *esprit de corps*. It considers itself without peer in the wide, wide world—again like every detective organization that ever existed. Grenfell could understand. If it had been merely a matter of internal crime, McFall's failure would not have mattered. No detective outside fiction can work miracles. This, however, was an international matter—a question, in a sense, of rivalry.

"Hard lines, old son," condoled Gren-

fell. "Cheer up, there's worse troubles at sea. Get a week's leave and come with me fishing somewhere. I've got to hang about for that time before my extradition case comes on again."

"I wish I could," said McFall dolefully. "I wish I could. I can see the Boss' face if I asked for leave just now. No, I've got to keep busy."

Detective-Inspector Grenfell made his fishing excursion alone. The place he selected was a flourishing little seaside town, which as yet had scarcely realized that it had the making of a "resort." He gave his holiday feeling full bent. London was many hundred miles away; the whole of it might be blown up, the Crown Jewels stolen, the Cabinet assassinated—and he could not be recalled. His mission was almost automatic. There was nothing on earth that could prevent him throwing off the cares of his profession and forgetting that such a place as Scotland Yard existed.

It is at such self-congratulatory moments as this that fate loves to interfere—fate in this instance in the shape of a sportive puppy dog, of no particular pedigree, and a woman's hand-bag.

Grenfell had noticed the young woman, an oval-featured, fair-haired girl in white, as he strolled on the beach. She was reclining in a deck chair, sunning herself, the hand with the bag listlessly dangling. The puppy arrived at a gallop, and in the next few moments was a hundred yards along the shore, growling ferociously as he strove to tear his loot to pieces.

The detective and the dog's owner raced to the rescue, but it was the latter who retrieved the hand-bag, now chewed to almost unrecognizable pulp, and returned it to its owner. Grenfell slackened his pace and the breeze blew a scrap of paper to his feet—a relic of the ruin the puppy had wrought. He stooped, picked it up, and mechanically crumpled it in his hand to throw away again. Then something about the pellet he had fashioned caught his attention. He straightened it out and examined it and looked round for the girl. She had vanished.

"May I be dodgasted!" exclaimed

Grenfell, and with long, quick strides, returned to his hotel and wrote a short letter in which he enclosed the scrap of paper.

Thus far he was only acting with the courtesy of the man who having stumbled across a piece of information passes it on to the one more immediately concerned. But morning brought with it a wire from McFall which might have seemed incoherent to any but a student of Kipling.

The bleating of the lamb excites the tiger. Ten thousand dollars reward now offered. Coming first train—McFall.

By eleven o'clock the burly Central Office man had reached the English detective. He was chuckling with glee. The despondency of the previous meeting was all gone. "We're on to it, old fellow," he cried. "You lucky dog! That was the corner of a five-thousand-franc note that you got hold of, and it's turned out by a workman. Some folks are born lucky. I've been sweltering for weeks to get a line on the case, and you without any interest in it come over and an end falls in your lap. Where's the lady?"

The Englishman shook his head. "Never saw the going of her, Mac. To tell the truth, I haven't worried much about it. I thought I'd give you a tip. Now it's your funeral."

McFall's lower jaw dropped and he whirled furiously on his friend. "None of that," he snarled. "I aint accepting no presents and don't you forget it. There's ten thousand dollars that the French banks are offering hanging to this case, my son, and you'll dip your fingers in it, or I'll know why. You can't shunt out of it. Now, will you be good?"

"I'll be good," smiled Grenfell. "Where do we stand?"

McFall became serious. He unlocked his suit-case and took out a dozen photographs. "I brought these on the off-chance," he explained. "There's no one in the gallery that answers your description but I guess these are all the young women likely to be in a big job."

Although he had only a few moments' view of the girl on the beach, Grenfell

was a trained observer and what he remembered of her features he remembered accurately. He shook his head over the photographs. "She's not here."

"May be a raw hand," he reflected.

"She may be," agreed McFall; "but it's no beginner who is turning out the dope. See here, Grenfell. This show isn't being run single-handed. It needs appliances and skill to run a show like this. A pickpocket or a burglar can shift around as he wants to. A forger wants definite headquarters. He's got to be fixed somewhere. Now I don't admire this town for a residence, but if I were turning out phony paper I wouldn't ask for a better place. It's out of the way, and it's handy to New York—what?"

"That's so," agreed Grenfell. "How do you purpose to locate them? I'm in your hands."

McFall wiped the perspiration from his broad forehead. "We'll get them," he declared. "We'll get them if we have to go through the State with a fine-tooth comb. Gann and Wills are coming this afternoon. Meanwhile we might go and have a chat with the chief of police here. We might want his help yet."

If Grenfell had not had some knowledge of the free and easy ways of the American police he might have been a little astonished to meet an important functionary on duty in his shirt-sleeves, with his chair tilted back, his heels on his desk, and a cigar between his teeth. The chief paid them the compliment of bringing his feet to the floor and passing the cigar-box.

He readily promised his assistance in searching the district, but scratched his head with a pen-holder as Grenfell described the girl. She could, he declared, be duplicated fifty times in the town. "Might be anyone," he added, a fact which the two detectives had reached for themselves long before. And then the door opened wide enough to admit a head and shoulders, and Grenfell found himself looking into the face of a girl—the girl.

He half rose from his seat and then sank back again. "I beg your pardon," she said hastily. "I am looking for Father, Mr. Burchnall. I thought he



might be with you." She withdrew her head, and the door closed with a click.

"Our mayor's daughter," said the Chief. "Isn't she a peach?"

Grenfell was doing some quick thinking. A more impulsive or less ready man might have blurted out something. But it had flashed across him that the mayor of an American city holds a considerable influence in police matters—extending to the appointment of even chiefs of police—and he had no wish to be laughed at. Even in a land where politics is a profession, the daughter of a high municipal official is unlikely to be concerned in a syndicated crime.

McFall was quick in the uptake. "The mayor's daughter?" he inquired. And as Grenfell nodded, he gave a long, low whistle.

NOW that a scent had been defined, McFall took the lead. He was a busy man for a couple of hours, though his labors were more real than apparent. He lounged through the little town, visited the barber, and chatted as an inquisitive stranger on local affairs while he was being shaved. He also displayed the little shield under the lapel of his jacket to a big policeman, swinging his stick by the loop on a side-walk, and



And then the door opened wide enough to admit a head and shoulders, and Grenfell found himself looking into the face of *the* girl.

The point, however, was gained that the girl was known. That, nevertheless, was far from simplifying the problem. In view of her position it was extremely unlikely that she had anything to do with a gang of forgers. On the other hand, why on earth should she have been carrying a French bank-note of high denomination?

"Mac," he said, when they got outside, "the local police can't help us."

"Never expected much," agreed McFall. "Still, it's as well to get 'em interested."

"I don't mean that. I've found the woman."

the policeman, flattered by the attention of the sleuth from New York, also talked.

So did the editor of the local newspaper to whom McFall introduced himself. None of these persons was aware that he was affording anything more than idle conversation.

Yet McFall when he returned to his friend at the hotel had a budget of information. He dropped onto a lounge wearily. "That kid's name's Prudence Fastlet," he said. "Playing the popularity game with a big 'P' for her old man. He's been here seven years and mayor three, and I guess wants to keep

on the Dick Whittington act. Retired theater manager from Columbus, Ohio. The villagers swear by him. Can't see any fun in being mayor of a show like this myself."

Grenfell mentioned a word. The other man rubbed a shiny cheek with his knuckles. "Nope. He aint grafting, and that's the funny part of it. He's straight. Working the popularity racket for all he's worth—father of the city, and all that sort of thing. Where *does* he come in?"

"Girl engaged?"

"No. Say, Gann and Wills are about due. I'll have a quick lunch and get a smart boy to slip 'em a note at the



depot. We don't want to know 'em if we see 'em." The eyelid nearest to Grenfell closed and opened again quickly. "The police chief here is sweet on the kid—see?"

"I see," said Grenfell. He had gathered McFall's idea. Burchnell would probably mention their visit either to the girl or her father, and the news of their presence in town would certainly spread. It might be as well that any attention should be concentrated on them.

Within an hour, two drummers had

arrived in town and registered themselves at a hotel. The two detectives, lounging in deck chairs on the veranda, paid them not the slightest attention. In about half an hour they emerged again and Grenfell rose lazily. "Think I'll go for a stroll," he said, and McFall grunted an indifferent assent.

Grenfell's sauntering took him by the mayor's house on the front, and curiously enough, the two commercial travelers strolled at much about the same pace in the same direction, but fifty yards behind. The Scotland Yard man dropped on a patch of grass and extracting a magazine from his pocket began to read. His face was in the direction of the house. Fifty yards away the commercial travelers also sat down. One of them found a piece of rock which he stuck up on end, and the pair amused themselves by shying pebbles at it.

Half an hour or more elapsed. Then from the house there emerged a figure in white. Grenfell took off his hat and fanned himself. A glance sideways showed him one of the commercial travelers fumbling with a boot-lace. He finished, and the pair strode away in the direction taken by the girl.

"That's all right," muttered Grenfell to himself. "They'll hang on to her now till all's blue." He knew the competence of the Central Office men, and renewed his story still with an eye on the white-painted house. He registered in his mind all the comings and goings of visitors during the afternoon, but that may have been merely a matter of habit. He had not intended to watch the house after he had pointed out Miss Fastlet to her shadowers. Indeed, though McFall insisted that he should share the reward if the forgers were run to earth, the case was no concern of his. He had no official standing in the United States, and he doubted if he could even legally effect an arrest.

But he hated the feeling of being a spectator, and presently he closed his magazine. There was no one in sight—no sign of life about the white house. The temptation overcame him. Rapidly he took a survey, decided the servants' quarters were probably located in the east wing, opened the gate and moved

into the shrubbery. It was indiscreet. It was probably criminal. But the lust of a chase was in his blood, and he coolly took his risks. He wanted to know more about the inside of the house, and this seemed an opportunity.

Fortune favored him, for he found an open window on the ground floor which led into a small sitting-room. He moved quietly and quickly across it and into the passage. He wanted to waste no time in his investigation.

The ground-floor rooms were of a perfectly innocent character, though Grenfell raised his eyebrows at what he recognized must be expensive furnishings. For a retired theatrical manager and a mayor who did no grafting, Fastlet certainly had ideas of comfort.

Once Grenfell slipped behind a portière and a servant brushed past him almost within an inch. He waited perfectly still for five minutes and then resumed his survey. If there had been nothing suspicious downstairs there was still less upstairs. He pushed his head in bed-room after bed-room, and the feeling that he was making a fool of himself became more convincing every moment.

There was one room, entered through a sort of sitting-room. The door refused to give as he twisted the handle. He swore softly to himself. "I might have known," he exclaimed. "Bound to be locked."

He remained standing in thought for a moment or so and then tried to peer through the keyhole. A flap on the other side defeated him. He sniffed inquiringly. Then he straightened himself up and found himself looking down the muzzles of a twelve-bore shotgun.

"Make yourself at home," invited the man at the other end of the gun. "Don't mind me." He was a tall, awkward man of fifty or thereabouts, square-faced, clean-shaven, with thin gray hair, and a mouth like a rat-trap. He wore a light lounge suit, and the noiselessness of his approach was accounted for by the fact that he was in woolen slippers.

Grenfell stood stock still. He knew that it would be very difficult to miss with a shotgun at three yards. Had the weapon been a pistol he might have

chanced a dash. He was wise enough to recognize that that was out of the question.

"Mr. Fastlet, I presume," he said politely. He was in a tight place and he knew it. There was nothing to be gained by losing his head.

"That's me," agreed the other grimly. "Don't you be too fresh, Mr. Man, and keep your hands away from your pockets. That's better." He walked across the room, selected an arm-chair and sat down, the gun still trained on Grenfell. It ran swiftly across the mind of the detective that an ordinary householder who had surprised a supposed burglar would have summoned help. "You can sit down, if you like," said Fastlet. "Only move smoothly, because my nerves are rather out of order. I'd just hate to have a corpse on my hands."

Grenfell leaned against the wall. "I'd rather stand, thanks," he said languidly.

"That's all right," agreed the other, "so long as you don't try any monkey tricks. Well, what do you think you are going to do about it?"

"It's up to you," pointed out Grenfell. He was philosopher enough to accept things as they happened, and he judged that if he was in a dilemma his captor was no less so.

Fastlet studied him silently for a minute or so. "So it's up to me," he repeated slowly. "You know that a man is justified in shooting a burglar whom he finds searching his house. Any jury would call that justifiable homicide." He raised the gun and glanced along the barrels. Grenfell read murder in his eyes.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't think you'll do that, Mr. Fastlet," he said. "I wouldn't if I were you. You see there is a Central Office man staying in town and he knows where I am. If I'm any judge he'll stir around pretty soon, and a dead body won't be easy for you to explain away."

The mayor's face was expressionless as he lowered the gun. "And who in Hades are you?" he demanded doubtfully.

"My name is Grenfell, detective-inspector of the Criminal Investigation Department, New Scotland Yard."

Fastlet dropped the gun and, standing up, broke into a thunderous roar of laughter as he extended a hand. "Well, I'm jiggered. The joke's on you this time. Burchnall told me that you and McFall were here, but I didn't expect to catch you burgling my house. D'you think I'm a forger. Ha, ha! That's good. What the dickens are you doing, anyway?"

It was a question that was difficult to answer. Grenfell had no excuse, no explanation to offer. If he had held any authority he might possibly have taken action. He really believed that Fastlet would have murdered him had he not bluffed about McFall. There was only one course for him to adopt. He smiled blandly into the mayor's face.

"Come and have dinner with me to-night," he said, "and I'll put you wise to the whole thing. As you say, the joke's on me. Now let me hurry away, there's a good man, or McFall will be making trouble. See you later."

GRENFELL had run his hardest for ten minutes before he found a very fat and very dignified policeman. He seized that official's sleeve and dragged him along for a dozen yards in his headlong career. "Get on to the fire-brigade," he said breathlessly. "Turn 'em out to the mayor's house. Don't ask questions. Get busy."

The intelligent officer gave a guttural and indistinct sound which Grenfell took for assent, and his sleeve now released, plodded at a slower but no less breathless pace in the wake of the detective.

Grenfell raced into the hotel, threw an inquiry and an order at the clerk in the hall in the same breath and found McFall at the telephone with Wills at his elbow. His hand fell on the sergeant's shoulder, and he tore him away in the middle of a sentence.

"Come on," he urged. "There's no time to waste. I've ordered a car."

A bell clanged noisily and a motor fire-engine raced by in the street below. Grenfell was too out of breath for lengthy explanations, but luckily the Central Office men were people of action.

"Garage end of first block on the right," said the clerk as they dashed once more into the hall. "I've 'phoned 'em to get their best car ready."

Nevertheless there was a wait of a few moments at the garage. Grenfell in short staccato sentences jerked out some of the conclusions he had arrived at. "Yes. We've got to be quick if that's the case," said McFall. "We'll drop Wills at the house." The car was ready by this time, and they jumped aboard. "Now cut loose for all she's worth," ordered McFall.

It had taken Grenfell a quarter of an hour to get from the mayor's house to the hotel. It took the car barely three minutes to cover the distance. A small crowd was gathered about the gates, and a thin, almost undiscernible wreath of vapor was circling from a window. The firemen had a hose out, and even in the roadway they could hear the smashing of axes on woodwork.

Wills jumped to the ground as the car slackened pace, and ran forward. They could see him making eager inquiries and presently he came running back. "Been gone ten minutes," he shouted. "Car a little old-fashioned green-painted two-seater. You'll pick him up easy."

The chauffeur pressed over a lever and the car slid smoothly forward. McFall took from his pocket a 44-automatic, took out a clip of cartridges and pushed it back again. "You got a gun?" he asked.

Grenfell shook his head.

"You never know," said McFall, dropping the weapon in his jacket pocket and fixing his eyes ahead on the blinding white road as it whirled towards them. Twice they slackened speed to make inquiries. It was on the second occasion that they learned the green-painted car was but a mile ahead of them, and a few minutes later a little cloud of dust in front showed that they were rapidly overhauling their quarry.

"Keep straight on," McFall advised the chauffeur. "We'll run ahead of them and hold them up."

In a little they were near enough to see a face peering over the back of the leading car. "Look out," cried Grenfell,



Then Grenfell jumped. He heard the wooden thud of McFall's automatic, and as he landed, his face was scorched by the explosion of the mayor's pistol.

and dropped without shame into the bottom of the car. The glass wind-screen shattered, and they could hear the shriek of a bullet as it tore overhead.

McFall was holding the barrel of his automatic balanced on the palm of his left hand. The thud of his answering shot was almost simultaneous. But a fragment of glass from the broken wind screen had caught their chauffeur on the cheek. The car swerved, righted again, and then the brakes were on.

"I'm done," said the chauffeur; "he's got me."

McFall swore. Grenfell was making a hasty examination of the man. "You're all right," he told him. "That's only a bit of glass. That won't hurt you."

The chauffeur looked relieved. "Get on," ordered McFall. "Let her loose."

"Not me," said the man doggedly. "This car isn't hired for gun-play. Count me out."

It was no moment to waste time in argument. McFall stuck the muzzle of his weapon against the back of the chauffeur's neck. "Get on with it," he ordered curtly.

Sullenly the chauffeur started up again. It was a choice of evils, but whereas the man in front might miss if he started shooting again, the detective certainly would not.

In a matter of five minutes they were again within fifty yards of the green car. McFall commenced to fire. He was taking no chances. Once only was a shot returned, and as they drew nearer, Grenfell, who was peering over the top of the seat, perceived the reason. Fastlet's chauffeur had also needed persuading with a pistol. He laughed as the situation became clear to him.

"Make him slack up as we come alongside the other car," he told McFall. "I'm going to jump for it."

McFall nodded. The Scotland Yard man braced himself for a leap. Inch by inch they drew near the other car, and Fastlet, facing around, fired twice. Both shots went wide.

Then Grenfell jumped. He heard the wooden thud of McFall's automatic again, and as he landed, his face was scorched by the explosion of the mayor's

pistol. Then his strong, wiry arms were around Fastlet, and he dragged him down backward. Both cars slid to a halt just as the two struggling men fell heavily to the ground.

The mayor was a powerful man, but he had been taken at a disadvantage. Moreover, Grenfell was as physically fit as it is possible for a man of forty to be. By the time McFall had come running to his assistance, he had the mayor pinned. The Central Office man put away his weapon and dragged out a shiny pair of self-adjusting, nickel-plated handcuffs which he clipped round the prisoner's wrists.

"Now we're all hunky," he said, and they assisted the prisoner to rise.

"This is you," said Fastlet, glaring menacingly at Grenfell. "If you hadn't been so darned quick—" He checked himself. "What's the charge, anyway? You've got nothing you can bring against me. This means an action for damages."

"Cut out the bluff," said McFall sharply. "You'll be held for forgery, and that's all there is to it. Let's get aboard."

**F**AR away, back in the Central Office records, long before the days of finger-prints, McFall came across the portrait of a young man. He pointed it out to Grenfell. "That finishes it. Here he is 'way back in the nineties. Soapy Smith he is—he was in the green goods trade at one time—but he's an expert forger. Got ten years in ninety-two and has dropped out of sight since."

"Let it alone," growled Willis. "Grenfell's going to tell us how he got onto the old man—not but what we've got him anyway," he added with a touch of *esprit de corps*. "Once we nailed the girl it was plain enough."

"I was lucky," admitted Grenfell modestly. "You people have been too long in the game not to know that luck counts a lot. But I'd have been nowhere without your backing. I couldn't have told for sure on my own that that piece of paper I picked up on the beach was from a forged note without your experts behind me. Still that was luck to start with. Then when McFall here found



out that the mayor was no grafter, we both got to thinking on the same lines."

"That's right," agreed McFall. "A man who's all for purity in municipal affairs and lives in the way he did has got a reason—you bet."

"Yes. Soapy must have had it all worked out when he went into politics. If the French police hadn't tumbled that the stuff was drifting in from the States he might have kept on forever. Who was going to get suspicious of the high-souled mayor of a seaside town? Besides, he had the local police in his pocket, though I suppose they knew nothing of what he was doing. He kept clear of political graft because he didn't want Pinkertons or any outside people called in by a purity committee. Then he was handy to New York."

"I figured this out while I was waiting to put you on to the girl. I gave McFall credit for having the same line. But I wanted to get the thing done with quickly, and it didn't seem to me likely to work out in a hurry on soft lines. That was how it came into my head to break into the house on the off-chance of picking up something. I'd have waited to put you boys up to it, but after all only one man could go in. There wasn't anything to be gained by sharing the risk among four."

"I'll own freely it looked as if I was on a dead end till I got upstairs. There was a room there—a sort of study—with another room leading out of it. The door of the second room was locked but I got a kind of mixed smell of chemicals. I knew then that I was right and that I had happened on the private laboratory. It was then that the old man happened on me with a shot-gun."

"He knew who I was—he'd been talking to Burchhall—and at first I looked like qualifying for a funeral. I bluffed that McFall was lying in wait, and we called a truce. We shook hands and I came away."

"It was pretty obvious he wasn't going to sit around once he'd got me out of the house, and if he made a get-away he wouldn't want to leave any evidence

behind him, either. That was how I came to think of a fire call."

"Lucky you did," observed Wills. "The firemen had just broken into the laboratory when I got there. He'd simply piled the place with junk, emptied a can of kerosene over it, chucked in a match and locked the door again. We saved enough out of the ruins to get hold of the whereabouts of their crooks in France. We've cabled the address over. He was supplying them with phony paper at fifty per cent discount."

"You haven't told me about the girl," said Grenfell. "What's happened to her?"

"She's safe enough," said Gann. "The old man seems to have got somewhat disturbed when he heard that McFall and you were on the warpath. He is a wary bird, and had no dealings direct with those who were handling the paper. He had a little cigar store in the Bronx under the name of George James, with a manager in charge. The manager had no knowledge of anything wrong—he didn't even know where his employer lived. Soapy never came to the town himself. He always sent the girl and she collected letters off the manager, and posted every mail that was to go out. Well, as I say, he smelt something and sent her off to New York to destroy any mail she found there. I pulled her actually in the store. She's his daughter, but I think she'll clear herself. He didn't trust even her. She never knew what was in the letters coming or going. By the way, she had in her bag the rest of the fragments of the note. It was a sample included in a letter to a crook named Wilson."

McFall yawned and stretched himself. "The chief's so pleased he'll eat out of your hand. Say, it's getting near hungry-time. I put it to the meeting that it's on to us to show Grenfell what little old New York can do in the way of dinners. As many as are in favor of the resolution will—"

"Aye," interrupted Gann and Wills together.

"Carried unanimously," said McFall.

**Next Month: "The Seven of Hearts," by Mr. Froest.**



# The Fools of the Feud



Uncle Luke

By  
Opie  
Read

ILLUSTRATED  
BY JOHN  
NEWTON  
HOWITT

*THIS is not a war story—at least, its scenes are laid in the Kentucky hills, instead of in Europe; but it is a story of human nature; and that, after all, is what the story of the struggle across the Atlantic will be when it finally is complete.*

**T**HE soothing essence of a "protracted meeting" lay upon the hills. The valleys rang with the hallelujah howl of the tuneless lout. Old men sang "Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound," and from the deep wood came lithe and graceful maidens, their arms full of wild flowers, vestal virgins filling the air with a silent but mighty hymn of perfume.

The Bradshaws, the Bucks, the Bradleys and the Duvalls, feudists who had taken many a crack at one another, came unarmed to hear the words of peace. The oldest among them could not recollect when their family differences began, or what was the cause of it all. It had begun with the flint-lock musket and had come down through generations to the repeating rifle, the glittering weapon of small, humane bore, killing

at a mile but doing it so gently, so kindly as not to offend the sensibilities of a bystander or to disturb religious worship.

But now all was changed. There would be no more conflicts. Industry and a growing love for art had quenched the thirst for blood. One of the Bradleys had invented a churn, and Miss Rocilla Buck had exhibited at a county fair a quilt on which, with different colors of calico, she had wrought the blazing countenance of the rising sun. After this invention and this work of art, all the neighborhood agreed that civilization had reached its height. Peace on earth and good will toward men was preached by the Rev. Bill Dick Duggs, at Dogwood Meeting-house, and many a hill-sider broke his empty bottle, fell on repentant knees and dewed the mourn-

ers' bench with his tears. Old Luke, leader of the Bradshaws, threw away his tobacco and swore that never again should that vile weed defile his mouth.

The meeting ended in emotional silence. Everyone felt that something strange was about to happen, a miracle. The revival had gone as far as it could go. They waited, and then the stillness was broken by an old and solemn man. In tremulous tones he urged that the congregation resolve itself into a peace conference that should embrace all Feudland.

"Religion, the dove of peace, has alighted in the midst of us," he said. "In the past we have had short intervals of peace, but what we seek and believe will now come to us is an uninterrupted era of tranquillity. Our devoted Feudland has ever been concerned over the heathen who live on a foreign shore. Money that we needed at home we have expended in sending fat men and skinny women to him, to beg him not to let his soul be damned. We wept over the stories of his benighted children, desecrating the Sabbath, laughing joyously among the flowers and ferns. They were too happy in their ignorance. We would introduce them to the terrors of torment. Now it is time that we were doing something for ourselves. Love is cheaper than hate. Let us embrace it."

About this noble speech silence wreathed her applause. Then old Luke Bradshaw arose. "My friends," said the ancient one, addressing his former enemies, "the world has so advanced that we, as human beings, cannot afford to fall out and fight. Modern weapons have become so destructive that fighting is both dangerous and expensive.

"In the old days, as many of my friends here assembled well know, we loaded at the muzzle. This required time but saved expense. Now, however, we pump out a continuous stream of lead, and this means a drain on our resources. For this and for many other reasons, to say nothing of the good will that has arisen among us, I am glad that there are to be no more feuds. And moved by this spirit, I hope that every man here will give me his hand. Tom Bradley, I shot your grandfather through the hip. Give

me your hand. Ned Buck, I smoked your uncle out of a hollow tree, but I want to take you by the hand and tell you that I love you. Sim Duvall, you wa'n't more'n five years old when us Bradshaw's set fire to your daddy's barn and burnt up his cow and his son-in-law, but I want to tell you that I will pray for you. Give me your hand."

The peace compact was signed. The men shook hands and the women kissed one another. Sis Duvall complimented the twins exhibited by Liza Buck, and Granny Bradley took a youthful Bradshaw upon her lap and hoped that his appetite was fine. Then came the singing of a peace hymn, composed by the Rev. Mr. Duggs, which, set to the tune of Old Hundred, gleamed many an eye with a tear.

**I**N this throng of mottled yeomanry of the soil there sat, somewhat apart from all the others, a tall and slender girl. Blue-black as clustered wild grapes was her hair, and strange as might have seemed, her eyes were brown, an autumnal color, glowing. Upon her there was the city's touch, but in all modesty, though no modesty could escape the shafts shot from the ambush of envy, from young women garbed in the pack-peddler's flary print and from the spinster who knew that upon the cross of man's indifference all virtue had been crucified. The meeting was breaking up, and she arose to go, when suddenly something appeared to arise in her path. A young man, who seemed as foreign to this assembly as herself and yet one who possessed the same reminiscent sympathy, bowed gracefully and spoke to her.

"I must have known you but I can't recall you. You are—"

"Yes, I am," she laughed.

He bowed again. "Ah, but I don't know any more now than I did before."

"You are—"

"Ah, hah," she headed him off, shaking with sentiment's causeless glee the wild grape clusters of her hair.

"You are a Bradshaw, I know; old Luke's granddaughter, if I mistake not. Yes, you come back quite clearly now, not that you ever were dim, but—"

"Yes, I know," she laughed, and yet a trifle disappointed that he was not more embarrassed. "But what is my name, now that I have become so clear?"

He pondered. "Let me recollect. Once we went to the same old log school-house. A feud broke out between our families, and the school-house was burned. You and I among the others stood looking at the flames. You made a face at me and then we parted."

"And is it possible that you can't recall the name of a girl who had become so intimate as to make a face at you?"

"I have never forgotten that face, not the one you made but the pretty one that preceded it, but I have a poor memory for names. As I remember, it wasn't a very romantic one."

"No," she assented. "In a feud family, I the eldest, being a girl, was a disappointment; and they called me Steve."

He laughed at the memory of it now brought back to him, but she did not; she looked solemnly at him, though the twilight of mischief still illumined her countenance.

"That was to punish you for disappointing them," he said.

"Yes, and to spite them when they regretted having called me Steve, I kept it after I grew up. But it made me cry many a time while I was little. . . You left here a long time before I did, didn't you?"

"A long time, no doubt; but how do you know?"

"Because I keep track of neighborhood affairs. You didn't even know that I was gone."

"No," he frankly admitted. "A bit of good fortune befell me, and I went away with the determination to shut these quarrelsome people, relatives and all, out of my mind. I went to school, then to a college and at the latter institution I now hold the chair of psychology. And what did you do?"

"Why, ever so long after I made a mouth at you, some people that came up here heard me trying to sing. They flattered me and told me that I ought to go somewhere and study. That fired my blood. And it was funny, the way I came to go. I had no money, of course,

but I had a cow that Grandfather had given me, and I got up early one morning and drove this cow about to find a purchaser. Think of a Bradshaw girl peddling a cow! But I sold her to a man that was driving cattle, and then I bought two calves, nearly grown, raised them and made a profit. Well, I kept on until I had quite a herd of cattle, sold out finally, and for the last two years I've been off at school."

She looked at him with a jaunty air, and he smiled down upon her. "That ought to make every man in Feudland ashamed that he has not made more of himself. And I am tempted to add something."

"But being a professor and therefore cautious, you won't," she ventured.

"Oh, it requires no courage. It was this: I wish that you were a Duvall rather than a Bradshaw. You would reflect credit upon us."

Her countenance darkened. "No, thank you. I prefer to be a Bradshaw even if they did call me Steve. But gracious, everybody has left us here alone."

"So it appears, Miss Stephen, but as this was a peace meeting no material harm can come from it."

She seemed suddenly to roughen herself like a pinnated grouse. "Don't call me 'Miss Stephen.' I'll stand for Steve but not for Stephen."

"You mean you will endure Steve but—"

"I said 'stand for' it, Professor."

"Ah, true. Shall we walk on?"

"Walk on where? Why, you aren't going with me. Mother wouldn't want you to come to our house. You ought to know that."

"But your father might not object."

"My father, sir, was killed by a Duvall." She turned away from him.

"But surely not by a near relative of mine. Wait a moment, please."

She halted, looking back at him. Slowly he advanced towards her. "You and I, Steve, have had a nibble at the world. We know that our people have been foolish. Let us be sensible. To-day our families have wiped out the past. From now on there must be a regenerating future. . . Let me walk a part of the way home with you."

She said nothing but went out with him. Along the rough and bending road they walked, in silence, for neither of them spoke a word. At a creek he helped her over the stepping stones, holding her hand, but she snatched it from him when they reached the other shore.

"You say that our people were foolish," she said.

"They were. But they were foolish from excess of sentiment. Broaden a feud until it embraces a nation, and it is then known as patriotism. Philosophy hopes that ultimate civilization will mean not patriotism but the brotherhood of man. Philosophy, like religion, needs much faith to bolster up its hope."

She laughed at him. "No matter where you might have lived, you would have had to go away from home to learn such jargon as that."

In foible we give smile for smile; in ridicule, jeer for jeer; but man angers when his wisdom is nettled with a laugh. "Poor fools of the feud, they sing, they pray, but they never learn," he said; and delighted that she had nipped him, her alto-ed merriment rang throughout the wooded vale, arousing the envious bird.

"There could be sweet hours of the feud," he said.

"I don't understand."

"Oh, yes you do. Your instinct is sharper than—"

"A serpent's tooth," she put in.

"I was going to say a silver thorn."

"But who ever saw a silver thorn?"

"I have. Once not long ago I was putting a girl's opera cloak about her shoulders, and a silver thorn she wore within its folds pierced my finger."

"Your heart, you mean."

And then they walked on in silence, until he spoke: "My heart has never been pierced. But what news can this be to you?"

"None," she answered, "—only an idle paragraph to be glanced at and forgotten." Then halting abruptly in her walk, she added: "But we have come far enough together. From here I must go alone."

"You don't want your mother to see you with me."

"I do not."

"But have not the feudists in a Hague of good fellowship signed a treaty of eternal peace?"

"Ah, but that does not mean 'Articles of Association,'" she laughed.

## II

ON his way home old Luke Bradshaw stopped at the house of Dan Pruitt, dealer in general merchandise, plows, harness, cutlery and shootlery. Pruitt was sorry that he had not been able to attend the peace conference. Heart and soul he was in favor of peace, had loved it ever since he shot Bob Smithers and had a leg broken in return. He surely would have attended the meeting, but obligations kept him at home: a sick horse that needed drenching, and, incidentally, his wife was sick.

"But I am mighty glad that you fellows have reached an agreement," said Pruitt. "It has always seemed foolish that you folks should go out hunting for each other when you might better be plowin'."

The tears of repentance and newly-awakened good-fellowship were scarcely drying old Luke's eyes. He took Pruitt by the hand and said that he loved everybody. "And Danny, my friend, if the Lord's willin', I'll never shoot at another man as long as I live. I was brought up to believe that the feller that lives on the other side of the mountain ought to be killed, just because he happened to live over there, but the schools and the churches have convinced me that this is all wrong. So from now on I am going to help the other man instead of tryin' to kill him."

Pruitt was much moved by this speech. From his hip pocket he took out a red bandanna handkerchief and wiped his eyes. "Uncle Luke,"—and he spoke in tones broken with emotion,— "them words are the noblest I have hearn in many a day. They put me in mind of the time when I went to a funeral over at Dry Fork. I have forgot who was dead, but I recollect that somebody said something—disremember what it was—but I cried like a child. And on that occasion I said, 'Them was noble words,' and I say so now. Uncle Luke, step out

to the store with me. I want to show you how I've got things fixed up."

"Yes," old Luke answered, "let us go over right now, for I want to look at them late plows you've got in. Since I don't have to lay out money for every improved gun that comes along, I can afford to buy the finest plows and harrows. Got any new ones?"

"Just from the factory, Uncle Luke, all ring-streaked and striped like Jacob's cattle."

THEY crossed the road to Dan's establishment, a low, log structure with many a bullet imbedded in the walls. How in keeping with the peace conference was the scene about this cross-roads emporium! Beneath the chestnut trees the sheep were grazing, an old wether ringing his mellow bell; and near by in the cool creek, grandmotherly cows were standing, chewing the quid of neighborhood gossip, while high on the dead branch of an oak sat the same old widowed dove who when heard is so melancholy and who when eaten is so tough. Dan unchained the padlocked door, threw open the shutters, and the soft light of the tipped-over sun illuminated the yellow stripes of a new hay-rake.

"As putty a sight as I ever seen," Old Luke declared, his eyes aglow. "Looks like it might be a pleasure for a feller to set up on that thing and rake up the hay that the Lord has give him. Let me try that seat."

The old man mounted the seat and sat there for a time, looking about him, dreaming here where peace had assembled the products of her art. His mind roamed back to the time when he combed the creek-bottom meadow with a rake made by the neighborhood carpenter. He thought of his old grubbing hoe and of the heavy ax fashioned by the village smith. What a world of change had come about since that time! And this improvement had been wrought by men who had thought to foster rather than to destroy. At this moment the old man's eye caught a new gleam, of something high on a shelf.

"What is that new bright thing up there, Danny?"

"That's something, Uncle Luke, that I don't think you'd care to look at, just at this time. It's the new high-power rifle, just out."

"You don't say so! No, it aint got no interest for me now. And aint that thing over in the corner the patent milker I've hearn about?"

"You've hit it, Uncle Luke. You can hitch that thing to a cow and she couldn't keep her milk to save her life. It grabs it right away from her—makes her look foolish. Git down and have a look at it."

"No, I believe not, Danny. I'm 'most too old now to pay much attention to such new things. I have only a few more years on the earth, and the good book says—" He couldn't quite gather what he wanted the good book to say.

"What were you goin' to remark, Uncle Luke?"

"It has sorter slipped my mind at present, but it will come to me before long. Anyway, I was just thinkin' that I had about finished my course on earth. And Lord, how I'd like to take a peep at this old world a hundred years from now and see the improvement. I reckon in them days a-comin' a feller can farm without gittin' out of bed. He can just lay there and read his book and listen to the birds sing; and on a wireless telephone the sermon of the big preacher a thousand miles away will be brought to his pillow. Yes, I'd like to live then. But say, Danny, in the meantime you might hand me down that new power gun—not that I have any interest in it, you understand, but I just want to see what possible improvement they can make over a rifle that I put aside the other day."

Dan took down the rifle and handed it up to him as he sat high on the hay rake; and most reverently he took hold of it, clicked its deadly machinery, sighted with it, a salivic bead gleaming in the corner of his mouth.

"How fur will she tote, Danny?"

"Uncle Luke, she is warrant to kill a man—I mean a deer, at two miles."

"You don't say so!" And the old man pressed his lips to the glittering steel.

"Of course I aint much interested, Dan,



And now the old church wherein the peace compact had been signed stood in the thick of the fight. Contending for this tragedy poured its reddening tides; and here on the floor amid mad-





vantage ground, the combat was hand to hand, rifles clubbed, knives flashing in deadly thrust. Into the sanctuary the  
dened yells they fought, old Luke and old Clem in the midst of it.



but about how much is this gun worth?"

"Couldn't be bought for a cent less than fifty dollars;" and deep in his hairy bosom the old man muttered: "Ah, but they do put the price up on the necessities."

"What did you say, Uncle Luke?"

"Oh, nothin', except that I'd better be gettin' along toward home."

He got down, still clinging to the rifle, went to the window with it and examined it in the strong light of the sun. "Yes, I must be goin'." But he stood there. "Yes, I must go—got to see to the feedin' of the cattle." Then he sat down on a chair, with the gun between his knees. "Danny, peace is the most blessed thing in the world. I take it."

"I believe you, Uncle Luke."

"Yes, sir, the most blessed—why, this thing will shoot as long as you pull the trigger. And nobody would want to raise a disturbance with a man armed with it. Danny, resolutions, hand-shakin' among the men and kisses among the women-folks is all right, but the real way to have peace is to git a better gun than the other fellow's got. Don't it hit you that way?"

"Hits me between the eyes, Uncle Luke."

"Thank you for agreein' with me, Danny. Yes, sir, I love peace like a boy loves his sweetheart, but I don't want to be cut out, you understand. I never raised a row in my life—everybody knows that; and all I want or ever have wanted is to be let alone, to pursue my own quiet way. In bein' quiet, Danny, I have put forth the appearance of weakness. It was noised about that I wouldn't fight, that I wa'n't prepared. That has been one of the Bradshaw troubles, never bein' prepared, which is to say, never havin' the moral persuasion. I might say. Dan, I haven't got any money right now, but I'll tell you what I'll do: Let me take this gun on home with me, and to-morrow you may come over and drive off the pied cow and the filly with one white stockin', the one you admired so much the other day."

"All right, Uncle Luke, that's a bargain."

"'Bliged to you, Dan. And it's all

for the sake of peace. You know that. Well, good evenin'."

### III

ONE afternoon, three days later, old Luke Bradshaw was sitting in his house, thankful for the blessings of a rain that had just fallen upon his thirsty corn, when Bill Stevens, a neighbor, came stumbling up the log steps at the door. When heartily commanded to enter and to deposit himself as if at home, he said that he had not long to stop, having dropped in only for a moment's chat.

"And how's all out your way?" Luke inquired as the visitor seated himself in a rocking chair.

"Oh, fair to middlin'. I met Brother Duggs yesterday and was powerful glad to hear about the peace contract. But say, do you know them Bradleys and Bucks air buyin' these new high-power guns?"

"You don't mean it!" old Luke exclaimed.

"Yes, sir; I heard so in town-yistidy, and I know it's a fact. My wife was in to get a roll of snuff at Barnes' store and seen Ned Bradley with one of 'em, and she 'lowed that it was about the skeeriest thing she ever saw."

"Well, if any man thinks it's goin' to skeer me he's slipped a cog in his judgment; that's all I've got to say. Why, confound them fellers, we had all jest signed a contract to put aside our guns. But I want to say it's gettin' so in this life that you can't take a man's note, much less his word. Well, whenever you see any of them fellers you tell 'em that I am onto what they are up to. The Lord blessed me with good eye-sight and a putty good understandin', tell 'em. And you tell 'em, too, that when I blow my horn, the Bradshaws will be standin' on the top of the hill with just as good guns as they've got. You tell 'em that as you go along."

"I'll tell 'em," said Stevens, arising to take his leave. "As I said, I haven't but a minute to stay. 'Lowd you might be interested in the news. I am a lover of peace, myself, and I hate to hear of folks armin' of themselves. Haven't



JOHN NORTON HUNTER 1904

She halted, faced him and at him flashed her scorn. "How dare you speak to me!"

seen one of them new automatic pistols, have you?"

"I guess I've seen all there is."

"I didn't know but you hadn't. I've got one here that's puttier than a speckled perch, the newest thing out. Look at her."

Stevens knew how to flash a jewel, and he flashed it, dazzled old Luke's eyes; and the head of the Bradshaw tribe leaned suddenly forward, his nether lip hanging.

"Billy, let me have hold of that—that epistle to the Romans. Laws a massy, with this thing in his hip pocket a feller would be dressed up for Sunday no matter what else he might have on. Looks like an egg laid by the bird of paradise. Where did you get it?"

"Oh, I hearn that it was out and I traded around for it, not that I needed it myself, you understand, but because I wanted to keep some one else from gettin' it, a Buck or a Bradley, for instance."

"Yes, I see," said old Luke, with a suck-in smack of the mouth as if tasting a sweet and delicate juice. "And now I don't want to tempt you—Lord knows it's fur from me to tempt either the weak or the strong—but you just leave this mountain trout with me, and drive off that yoke of red steers out yonder."

And when Stevens had driven off the steers, old Luke sat down to address a few lines to the Bradleys, the Bucks and the Duvalls:

I hear that you fellers are buyin' up new fangled guns and pistols, and I have a note from some of you, accusin' me of doin' the same. But I want to say that if I am it is because I love peace. In the Book somewhere it says somethin' like this: "He who hath no sword, let him sell his raiment and buy one." And wharfo must he buy a sword, to eat his vidults with? To shave with of a Sunday mornin'? I take it that it means no sich. I take it that it means, "Buy a sword to remind the other feller that he must behave himself." I believe that all of us are on the right track. I believe that the better armed we are the better prepared we are for peace. By the way, I hear that Sam Buck is negotiatin' for the old Taylor farm. Why does he want more land? Is it that he

wants to raise more Bucks on it? It hits me that him and all of you fellers have enough land as it is. You accuse me of wantin' more land. I don't, but I've got a mortgage on a few hundred acres to the west of me, and I may in the natural run of things have to foreclose.

ON the following Sunday the Rev. Mr. Duggs preached a powerful sermon on peace, and the editor of the *Scrub Oak Blaze* double-spaced a declaration that never in the history of the Feud Country had tranquillity been so secure.

But about this time a dog fight broke out in front of Hackett's store. Some one threw a stone, and a brindle dog limped off, howling.

Amos Baxter said he thought that the brindle dog belonged to, or at one time had followed, some one to the house of a Bradshaw. Old Luke Bradshaw heard about it and said that it made no difference whether or not the dog was or ever had been an asset of the Bradshaw family. That point was not to be considered. But there was a point to be weighed and estimated, and it was this: that the man who threw the stone *believed* that it was a Bradshaw dog, and that he did it to humiliate the family.

Sam Buck said that he didn't throw the stone, but that if he wanted to he would and that no one could restrain him.

Luke dropped him a note and told him to take it back within twenty-four hours or something might happen.

Sam answered that things had been happening ever since he could remember and that if anything else chanced to happen, it would not be his fault.

Hereupon old Luke blew his hunting horn and his kinsmen assembled.

"My children," said the patriarch in tones as mournful as a comic song in a nickel show, "we have been grossly insulted. While we have been pursuing the arts of peace, our enemies have been getting ready to tread on us. We have better guns than they. Therefore what shall we do?"

"Shoot 'em!" cried the Reverend Nick Bradshaw. "Shoot 'em, for the Lord is on our side."

Old Luke took the Reverend Nick by the hand and wept. "I believe what you say. The Lord is on our side for He told me so. But we don't want to hurt anyone. At this late and shinin' day of civilization it is wrong to shed blood. Fall in!"

Instantly they all of them struck the well-known Bradshaw trot, and so swift was their speed that by noon they had reached the small plantation owned by the Joyce family. It was only a narrow strip of land, but it lay between the Bradshaws and the Bucks. Billy Joyce was out in the yard.

"Where are you fellers goin'?" he inquired.

"Over to get at the Bucks," old Luke answered. "And we demand to go through your garden."

"No, you mustn't do that. You'll tramp down my garden sass."

Old Luke flew into a passion. "What's garden sass compared with the honor of a family? Boys, throw down the fence."

The boys were eager to respond. They tore away a gap in the fence, and were treading down the tomato vines when Joyce and three of his sons fired on them from the house. Old Luke waved his hat and called out: "My children, outraged in the light of day. I am more than ever convinced that the Lord is on our side. Burn the house."

AND now the travesty was turned to death-dealing and terrific earnestness. The Bradshaw hosts swept over the little field, old Luke shouting his ranks onward against rifle fire poured into them.

"Scoundrels, that they should have been prepared!" the old man stormed. "What right had they to expect us ever to cross their ground! A fine roan filly to the man that blows up their devil-harboring den!"

Men rushed forward, but were driven back. Again up to the log wall, and some of the fools of the feud fell, reddening deeper the red flowers that grew about the door. But one of them, a desperate fellow, put a keg of powder under the floor, and set it off; and the old logs flew into the air. The one who achieved this "heroic deed" was blown

high with the logs and fell as lifeless; but the Bradshaws cheered his corpse, making other fools eager to attain an end so noble and so brave.

The Joyce family, those left alive, fled down the valley, the women weeping, the men swearing to be avenged. At night they came into the neighborhood of the Bucks, the Bradleys, the Duvalls, and now there arose a general cry to arms, the different families forgetting in an instant that they had ever fought one another, but eager all to combine against old Luke Bradshaw and his murderous clan. But old Luke gave them no time for maturing a plan of organization or attack. Before morning dawned he was among them, shooting their cattle, burning their barns, driving them from their houses.

They disputed every inch of the way. At Fox Trot Creek they maintained a desperate stand, sometimes charging across the stream, gaining ground, losing it, each man on both sides ever eager to sacrifice himself for the applause of the others. Old Clem Duvall, natural leader of the combined families, prayed for a fair shot at old Luke, and at night when his men slept in water-dripping thickets, he would prowls about, his aged bones seeming not to know the meaning of weariness. On both sides, along the firing lines, the women passed, bringing food and cheering their loved ones to surer marksmanship.

One day there came a general breaking up of all plans, whirlwinds of attack, charges, repulses. And now the old church wherein the peace compact had been signed stood in the thick of the fight. Contending for this vantage ground the combat was hand to hand, rifles clubbed, knives flashing in deadly thrust. Into the sanctuary the tragedy poured its reddening tides; and here on the floor amid maddened yells they fought, old Luke and old Clem in the midst of it. Now there came a loud crackling and the increasing roar of flames. The church was on fire, but oblivious of fire the savages fought. Right and left they fell, till only two remained, ancient Luke and Clem. The pulpit was between them, and over it and about it they thrust at each other

with their knives, grim as frost on a tomb. The flames roared; the roof was falling in; but to nothing did they give their heed—the one to nothing except the blood of the other. The old pulpit was overturned, and they grappled, rolled down upon the floor, but never to rise, never to be followed to the grave, never a winding sheet except the sheet of flame that now was winding them.

And so they perished, these old fools of the feud.

## IV

A SEASON passed, another summer, and another autumn was purpling the wild grape. On the sward beneath a tree and near a pool where the leaf ships sailed gently round and round there sat a slender girl. She held half open a book of verse. Suddenly she looked up, startled. It was not a footstep that had aroused her; it was the sweet tone of a flute. Half unconsciously she caught up the melody and sang, and in such harmony that it seemed a louder flute was playing. Nearer came the musician, though she knew it not until a footstep aroused her; and then, glancing about, she sprang to her feet. A young man bowed.

"Please don't go, Steve."

She halted, faced him and at him flashed her scorn. "How dare you speak to me!"

"How often angered woman has thus denounced a man! No, you must not go until you have heard what I have to say."

"I don't want to hear anything you have to say. Your grandfather murdered mine."

"No, foolish old men, they murdered each other. But what have you and I to do with it? We were called upon to suffer humiliation, the humbling of family pride. But we were not consulted as to whether or not we should pit our pride, one against the other. I know that our blood is strong; but right, justice, civilization should be stronger within us than the call of barbaric blood."

"I will not talk to you. I don't wish ever to see you again."

Hastily she walked away from him. Softly again young Duvall blew his flute, but she did not look back at him, did not catch up his melody; she waded through the creek, though the water was cold, and he watched her, companion of the setting sun, going down beyond a distant hill.

THREE days later Duvall was strolling down the creek, musing over the pools where he had angled for perch, years ago. Off in the west, black clouds had gathered; thunder began to boom like cannon and toward the east the lightning thrust its glittering lances. Near by was the old Bradley mill, falling into ruin. Into the mill he ran in time to avoid the rain; and when the second hard lashing of the storm cut down at the earth, the narrow doorway darkened. Duvall shrank back, got behind an old hopper, moved around and cut off the retreat of the granddaughter of old Luke Bradshaw. He saw her shaking the rain-drops from her hair.

"Wont you sit down?" he said.

Quickly she turned about and from her dark eyes gave him a look of hate.

"Out of that door and let me pass!"

He bowed. "I beg your pardon, but you must not go out in this storm."

"What is it to you, sir, where I go?"

"As a human being—"

She laughed, and he thought he had never heard anything so bitter. "You, a Duvall, and dare speak of a human being! Get out of that door."

He did not move. "Your demand is a cruelty against yourself. Look, ahead water is sweeping down. It would engulf you."

"But what difference can that make to you? I should think that you would delight to see me swept away. And you would. You are only keeping me here to torture me. Like all of your infernal race, you have no heart. As a child you were taught to drink blood. I demand the right to pass out of this place."

"And as a man I must refuse to comply with that demand."

"You mean not as a man but as a brute...I came back here to see the graves of those once dear to me, but—"

"And so did I, Miss Bradshaw. And

## "Why Campbell's?"



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Others say "It is so easy to prepare." "It is so nourishing." "It is always the same." And so on.

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## THE FOOLS OF THE FEUD

this morning I loitered among them over near where the old church stood."

"Church!" she repeated contemptuously. "I shouldn't think you would dare mention church. I should think you would fear that the lightning might strike you. Let me pass!"

"Not until this storm is over. Don't you see, you couldn't get out now anyway. The water is coming down in a terrific swirl."

"That should make no difference to you... If I only had something to kill you with!"

"With your eyes."

"Oh, I didn't know that such a brute inhabited the earth."

"I am not what you might exactly term a purist, Miss Bradshaw, but brutes hardly *inhabit*. You couldn't say that the earth was peopled with tigers."

"Well, of all the foolish remarks I ever heard that is the worst."

"It does sound rather queer. But I am a queer fellow, and I want to make a bargain with you: Let me talk to you for just a few moments, and then I shall be pleased to obey your commands. Is it a bargain?"

"I can't help myself."

"But is it a bargain?"

"Yes, you brute."

"Thank you. Now let me ask you: Did you ever hear of as foolish a set of people as the Duvalls, the Bradleys, the Bucks and the Bradshaws? But you need not answer; we will take it for granted. They have killed one another, and for what purpose? Their houses are burnt, their lands laid waste. And it will take the survivors many years to get back a semblance of all that has been destroyed. Yet all our people professed to believe in Christ, the Christ who never countenanced the shedding of a drop of blood—except his own."

"Your people began it. You circulated lies about the others, and honor compelled them to fight."

"But don't you think that common sense is better than honor? Honor imagines; common sense investigates. Honor cares nothing for the cost; common sense figures."

"Are you holding me merely to give a lot of professor talk?"

"Oh, no. I am merely leading up to what I want to say. Now neither you nor I had anything to do with that quarrel and its awful consequences. Then why should we be at enmity now?"

"We should not, and therefore why should you hold me here a prisoner? What right have you?"

"Reason holds no prisoners; reason holds converse."

"More professor talk. I have listened to you. Now let me go."

"Don't you see the water is almost up to the floor? The tide would engulf you and sweep you away. You shall not attempt it."

"Then you must acknowledge that you are a liar."

"Let me reflect: Yes, I think I can do that."

"Still a Duvall."

"Not only a Duvall, but a man."

"A man does not take advantage of a woman."

"I am going to protect you."

"I don't want your protection. I would rather die than to be protected by you. I hate you."

"No doubt, but even hate should have some little judgment. Look, it would be certain death to step from this door. And how fast the water is rising," he added, turning from her and looking out upon the flood. The roar was loud, growing louder, and the old ruin shook against the mighty current. The central fury of the storm now seemed to be immediately above, for straight down came the sharp lightning, great Indian arrow-heads of fire. An ancient oak, hip deep in water, flew into splinters, its boughs coming down with a mighty splash.

"We are going to be drowned," he said.

"Yes, and it is all your fault. We could have got out of here."

"We," he repeated. "You didn't say you wanted me to go with you."

"No, I didn't. But you could have let me go and then you could have done what you pleased. It would have been immaterial to me."

"No," he answered, "you could not have gone, for the moment you entered, the head-water struck. We—"



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the rooms; this means health protection and a large reduction of cleaning work and lessened damage to furnishings—great advantages to the womenfolks.

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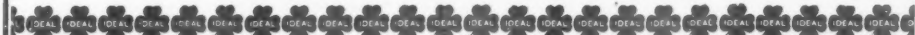
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At that moment a bomb from a Zepelin of the clouds burst in the old mill. Instantly the dust of many years and the wheat-chaff of bygone days flashed up in flame. The man strove to be calm, and he was, but his face was white.

"Now we have both fire and water. These old timbers will burn like a hay loft. Miss Bradshaw, you must obey me—to save your life. You must let me take you in my arms and—"

"You insult me."

"Not intentionally. I believe that I can swim ashore with you. For once, let a Bradshaw and a Duvall be reasonable toward each other. Let me save your life."

"I should hate my life if you saved it."

He smiled upon her and waved his hand toward the crackling fire, mounting and spreading fast. With her eyes she followed his gesture and drew back with a shudder.

"I would rather drown than burn," she said. "Let me out."

**A**N old beam fell. The wall was crumbling. He stepped aside. She sprang toward the door. He seized her and leaped with her into the flood. She struggled to free herself. She scratched at his face. Over and over they whirled. A great swimmer he must have been, for manfully he fought the current, buoyed against it, caught hold of a willow lapping in the tide. She had fainted. Her arms hung limp. He held her about the waist, with one arm, holding hard the willow with the other hand. Up he straightened, and through him went a thrill. His feet were on the gravel. But for a time he was afraid to turn loose from the tree. He looked up stream; the old mill had fallen in. It was a long distance away, it seemed. He wondered if he were going to faint. Then he looked down at the woman, pale as a lily and as beautiful. He wondered if there were a gulch between him and the shore. A charred timber from the mill shot past, an old shingle covered with moss. He felt a contempt

for himself, on the verge of death, giving minute notice to things so unimportant. He wondered if the water were still rising. If so, they were lost. Why not try for the shore? If there were gulches and they were not wide, he could swim them. Out he struck, boldly, keeping the woman's head above the water. After a tiresome struggle he let himself down and touched bottom. Then he waded ashore.

The rain had ceased to fall. On the thick grass he laid the girl, kneeling beside her. "Poor idiots that we are," he muttered. "You hate me—yes; and I—I hate you so that I love you." Over so silly a thought he laughed whimperingly. "Love you—yes, do you hear!" He thrust his face close to her own. "You are dead, and I have loved you to death. I choked out all of your life. You would have clawed out my eyes, but what of that, since love is blind! I will steal you away and bury you in Duvall ground. I will take your dead hand and call you my wife. Ah, I have only the blood of my race. How can you expect me—"

**A** MAN in a wagon found them lying insensible beneath a tree. He summoned help, took the girl to his own house and had Duvall taken to the house of a neighbor.

One day when the autumn had reached its depth of brown, the girl sat beside the pool, now thick-covered with dead leaves. There were now no notes of the flute, but up the valley came some one singing, singing a song she loved, and she sprang to her feet to run away; but cowards run, and she stood there, looking down the valley. He came and she did not flinch from him. She stood looking him in the eye. Neither of them smiled. He reached forth his hands, took hold of her, saying no word; he kissed her, and upon his breast she sobbed out words that had no meaning, but words that rang like a prayer.

*The world hates, the world kills—  
the world loves.*

**Opie Read's stories are printed exclusively in The Red Book Magazine. There will be another in an early issue.**



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# The Indian Sign

*WHEREIN the manager tells  
what happened when the  
coming champion became jealous.*

By Octavus Roy Cohen

Author of "For Love of Sheila."

ILLUSTRATED BY  
FRANK B. HOFFMAN



He lets Carter go plugging up the road wit' his flannel tongue hangin' out, and stops—fr a drink o' water! Kin yuh beat it!

**T**HINGS were certainly on the blink that year. The Noo York Legislature had crabbed the racin' game, an' meal-ticket scrappers were bein' handled by managers who didn't know enough about the fight game to run a peace conference. I drifted down to Charleston, South Carolina, where they'd opened th' track at Palmetto Park—an' I found a gold-brick there. Na-a, not one of these phoney ones y' read about, but the real eighteen-karat stuff. Jimmy Kelley was his monniker. You've heard of him? Sure—who hasn't?

Just before the main bout in a fight-show they pulls off there one night a giant comes into the hall and overflows the chair next to mine. I sized him up quick and decided not to raise any special objections to his elbow poking me in the ribs, although it was darned uncomfortable. Then they introduces the main-go scrappers and the bout starts.

It was a corking bout. A clever has-been jabbed and then crossed with his

right, and then danced away; then he'd do the same thing all over again, gettin' away time after time without a return. He cut the youngster he was fightin' to ribbons. But I've been in the game too long not to know the end of it. In the eleventh round the old guy begins to tire and the youngster lands a few pile-drivers.

Thirteen rounds, and they carry the old fellow out of the ring. The crowd yells and settles back for the battle-royal.

The husky next to me turns around kinder contemptuous-like, looks me in the eye and says:

"I c'd lick either one of them guys in six rounds!"

It didn't sound boastful at all, and I looks at him mighty hard.

"You could?" I asks.

"Sure."

"Ever fought before?"

"Not in a ring." When he said that I glanced at his hands—big, raw-knuckled hams they were, and it made me sorter creepy. I could imagine him landing—

"Why don't you?"

"I've asked the manager to put me on, but there's nothing doing. I'm broke and I need the coin."

Time was hanging kinder heavy on my



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hands and I always did have a bug about finding fighters in unknown places. So I made him a proposition. Let me manage him: I'd guarantee him twenty-five dollars for his first scrap, and after that split with him in the usual way of manager and fighter. He looked me over, seemed satisfied—and gave me the O. K.

I saw the manager that night. He liked a dollar about as well as the next fellow, and he fell for my proposition.

Well, to make a long story short, my giant tells me that his name is Kelley—Jim Kelley (good fightin' name, that) and that he's in the pink of trim, which I believed. The next day I get him stripped in a little gym' over the pool-parlor across the street, and I begin to feel pretty safe about that money of mine.

Say, he's a whale! Six foot, one; slim-waisted; barrel-chested—well, you know Jim Kelley all right. And fast—man! you never saw the beat of it. Looked like a ten-second proposition from a ring and track standpoint—both.

The fight comes off Friday night. Honest, I wouldn't have believed that he'd never been in the ring before, except that he didn't want to quit scrappin' when the gong rang for the end of the first round. At the end of the second—the second ended after less than two minutes' fightin'—he climbed through the ropes grin-nin'; and not even tickled by Dick Donnel, who'd been his

opponent. Then comes a fight with Tommy Miller.

It was Jimmy Kelley's try-out. That guy Miller was a comer, and for three rounds he laced Kelley all over the ring; right, left, right, right, left, left, right! It was fierce. But Lord! that kid o' mine was some glutton for punishment. He kept on shaking his head and comin' in and beggin' for more. And he got it—gee whiz, he got it!



He'd met the skirt on one of his road runs. Saw her leanin' over the fence—straw bonnet, calico gown and all the other props.



## When Your Baby Is Grown Up

THE food you give your baby now will affect him to the last day of his life. Whether he has the strong body and clear mind that mean success depends upon you. The baby who struggles against cow's milk now—even if he survives—and alas, our babies pass from us by the hundred thousands every year—may grow up with the ruined digestion that makes misery and unhappiness.



Train your baby for life-long health from the beginning. Give him breast milk as long as you can—then wean him slowly on

# Nestlé's Food

which for three generations has built up men and women with healthy bodies and clear heads.

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At the end of the third round I thought he was pretty well all in. He came to the corner bleedin' from the nose and mouth, one eye blacked and the gore fair streaming from him. I fan him and spill about a quart of ammonia over that big torso of his and ask him if he can last it out. He grins up at me:

"Say," he says, "betcha ten I'll knock him out in three more rounds!"

"What?" It kinder knocks me off my feet, that sorter talk.

"Why, that dub aint got *nothin'*," he asserts positive-like; and then the gong clangs.

"I'll go you," I calls, as he trots into the center of the ring—although I know that my ten's a gone proposition by his manner. Some of this subconscious stuff the writers talk about, I guess. Anyway, in the fifth round they carried out an unconscious figure. Miller!

I'm wide awake to possibilities then, and I call Jimmy into executive session.

"Now see here, Jimsy," I counsels fatherly-like, "I'm wise to this here fight game from A to Zed. Tried a little of the glove stuff myself when I was younger and had a less prominent mezzanine; and I've handled some good ones in my day. Heard of Tiger Thomson, haven't you?"

Jimmy nods intelligent like a cow.

"Well, he was one of mine. Picked him up on Third Avenue, Noo York, y'know. Well, I'll come straight wit' you, Jimsy boy: I think you're a corker, a peacherino. I think you've got the goods if you're developed right, and I'm the guy who can do it. If you're game to put yourself right under my wing for better or worse, richer or poorer, with a hold-me-tight contract drawn by one of these here Broad Street Choates providin' fifty-fifty, we're in for a good thing. But, kiddo, if you're under my management, you're there for keeps, and you've got to obey orders strictly. Are y' on?"

"I am, sure," he grins readily. "I'm grateful for what you've done for me, an' I'll stick by you."

"Great!" sez I, giving him the glad-hand. "In a year we'll make John D. look like an also-ran on a muddy track."

That was how me and Jimmy Kelley

got together. I wired North to Freddy Dugan, and he sent down a big long-shoreman named Carter who knew a thing or two about boxing and who made a bird of a sparring partner. I kept Jimmy hard at it for a month; had the Nonpareil manager bring down Frankie O'Neal, at a big guarantee; packed the house at one to five dollar prices—an' lost money at that—an' had the satisfaction of seein' Jimmy finish him in the third round. Easy victory, too.

We jump to Atlanta, where the game was pretty much on the hog, owing to some phoney stuff that'd been pulled there, gettin' the bugs sore, and then we goes to Chattanooga and Memphis, where the game's flourishin', and we pull down a neat little expense-money wad. After that we tried N'Orleans for a while, and it was there that Jimmy finally finished Kid Franklin in the ninth round and got his mug stuck in the Noo York papers.

Then it was Noo York for ours; and they gave us a mighty good reception. First class heavyweights always were a stellar attraction with the fans. First one man and then another he beats; tearin' into them hammer an' tongs, and layin' 'em cold inside of ten rounds. An' then I started howlin' for a scrap with Knock-out McConnell.

As you know, McConnell never was a champ, but the writers all held that he was miles better than Battling Larisey, who was. Why, Larisey'd been runnin' out of the match with McConnell for so long that they'd called him the cheese champ, same as they did Ad Wolgast.

Anyway, the clubs got biddin' for the scrap, and the newspapers got busy, because it was all but a title bout. The newspaper guys opined that Jimmy'd bitten off more than he could chew.... but they agreed on the fight.

Durin' all this time, Jimmy'd been tractable as a calf, an' he thought I was the greatest thing that ever hit the pike. But suddenly, shortly after we hit Vernon an' quartered at Wilson's road-house, he' grew preoccupied. Finally I wormed it out of him. The big kid was in love.

Lordy, he was sure hard hit. He was big-hearted as a baby, and sentimental



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till it hurt, although I'll confess I'd never suspected it before that. But it seems that he'd met the skirt on one of his road runs. Saw her leanin' over the fence—straw bonnet, calico gown and all the other props that go with them pictures they've got stuck all over the walls at the Metropolitan in Noo York—Museum of Art I mean, not the café on Fourteenth Street.

Well, anyway, Jimmy sees this skirt and falls for her *pronto*. He lets Carter go plugging up the road wit' his flannel tongue hangin' out, and stops—f'r a drink o' water! Kin yuh beat it! A trainin' fighter, wit' four miles of trottin' ahead of him, stoppin' for a drink of water! But that's the way this love bug hits a guy.

So he comes to me one day blushin' like a schoolboy who finds that he's got the bow and stern of his first long pants twisted in puttin' 'em on, an' asks can he marry her.

"Does she know y'r a fighter?" I asks.

"Yes," he answers, meek and quiet. "I told her, an' she—she—"

"What's she do?"

"Works in the dairy," he moons.

"Humph! Milkmaid stuff, eh? Reg'lar 'Way Down East' effect. Does she love you?"

"O-o-h! say—" he drawls, all flustered up. "O-o-h! say!"

"Well," I spits out, "if it affects you that way, I say get married an' bless you my children. But one thing, Jimmy—nothin' doin' on this Cupid business until after the McConnel fight. Get me?"

He was so darned glad that I approved, he wanted to hug me. But I let him go callin' that evenin' and hug the girl instead—anyway, he had pretty, long brown hair all over his left shoulder when he came in. Gee! I've often wondered how a girl'd like to snuggle in a pair of arms like his.

Came the big fight with McConnel. Money just pourin' into the box-office; an' get-rich-quick speculators makin' good and plannin' to pay the last installment on their suburban houses. Yeh! even a speculator's human—at times. Of course, business is business!

McConnel looks like the real thing when he climbs through the ropes first

crack; but when Jimmy follows a few minutes later I see Standish, his chief handler, shake his head kinder doubtful. Never was a fiddle as fit as Jimmy that day. An' the darned fool has a picture of the kid—Vi'let, her name was—stuck under his fightin' sash. Good newspaper stuff, but the reporters wasn't wise, and I wouldn't go queerin' Jimmy by lettin' it out—even though I wanted to.

That fight was a hummer! In about the fourth round both men forgot that there was such a thing in the world as science; an' they worked to make themselves eligible for admission to the butcher's union. Blood! Say, the war in Europe is a selling-plaster alongside.

It was an even break until the twelfth. In a mix-up Jimmy landed that right uppercut of his. Gawd, that's a blow! McConnel kinder dropped his hands and teetered back and forth on his heels—an' his knees wobbled.

"Now's y'r chance, Jimmy!" I yells; but he beat me to it. His left crossed to McConnel's stomach, an' his right collided with that jaw again. An' Jimmy Kelley stands in line for a crack at Larisey for the title.

Four days later we celebrates his nuptials. Had 'im all dolled out in a full-dress rig; an' Vi'let looked like one of these picture-book ladies. The preacher pronounces them man an' wife as Jimmy slips a plain gold one next to the chunk of ice he'd given her when they became promised; an' it's all over but the kissin'. Yeh; I got two—I envied Jimmy.

He takes a lay-off for three weeks, an' then comes to me for trainin' again. An' I must say that Vi'let worked hand-in-hand with me. She was a little brick, that kid, an' no mistake. You can bet Jimmy keeps in trim.

Then I starts howlin' for a crack at Larisey; but the champ' didn't seem to hear me. Course the papers are behind me to a man—they're always behind the gink who wants the scrap. They said that Jimmy was the best scrapper in the world, and I lays claim to the champeen-ship. But that stuff don't go over here like it does in England, where the Lonsdale holder has to scrap every so often or forfeit. Larisey was the champ' an' that



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cut down the guarantees offered Jimmy for scraps.

But there bein' nothin' doin' with Larisey, an' a bird of an offer comin' from a theatrical manager, I puts Jimmy on the vaudeville stage.

I doped up a spiel to start every show. I'd bull the audience 'bout Jimmy's ability, an' lay claim to the champeenship. Then, if it was a burg where they'd stand for the glove stuff on the stage, I'd challenge any man in the house. Once or twice, after about six months of it, some big boob'd come up an' get his block knocked off, an' a little of his enthusiasm spilled—all red—over the stage. An' then we hit Kenosha.

"—Any man in th' audience," I goes on in my spiel. "An' he'll forfeit fifty dollars if he don't knock him out inside o' four rounds. Is there anyone in the house who—"

"Yes, I'll fight him."

The voice was so thunderous-like, I looked intently. A giant—he must've weighed two hundred and forty stripped—unfolded himself from a seat in the pit, an' starts toward the stage. Jimmy grins at me.

"Some beef," he says cheerful.

"Yeh," I agrees, "some beef. Slam 'im hard. He looks too confident."

The manager comes hustlin' back to me.

"Warn y'r man to look out f'r squalls," he says. "That's Buck Nevins, an' he's quite some scrapper around these parts. Been fightin' for two years an' never been licked."

"Ever fought any good ones?"

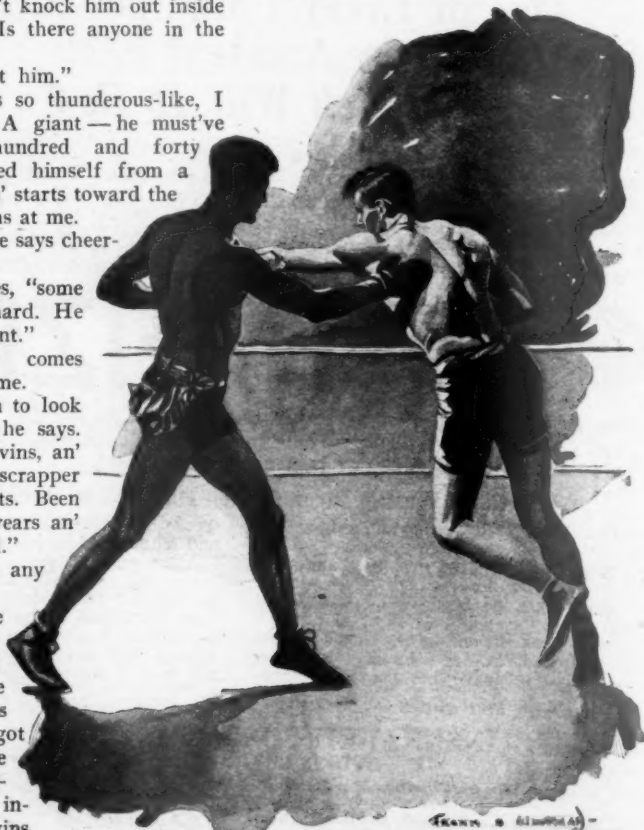
"N-o-o." The manager scratches his head an' I can see that the admission hurts him; but he's got the local pride stuff goin' a mile-a-minute, an' he insists this here Nevins is a world-beater.

I goes into the dressin' room an' lamps the manager's phenom'; an' frankly he looks pretty good to me. Handsome—say, that Nevins was the handsomest man I ever put me glims on. He was what these artist chaps call an Adonis.

"This guy has been there before," I warns Jimmy. "Don't take no chances."

The house is all excited; an' I understand for the first time why it's so jammed that night. Y'see, it was something of a frame-up, an' Nevins'd been regularly trainin' for it. He had a bunch of seconds wit' him an' all.

They shapes up like a title go. I referees, bein' satisfactory, an' explains the rules. Nevins nods like he knows the ropes; an' the gong sounds. The house gets quiet as a tomb.



Right off I seen that this here Nevins wasn't no novice.



They touch gloves an' step back; an' right off I seen that this here Nevins wasn't no novice. He crouches well over, protectin' his stomach, left hand out, right ready. Jimmy does as usual—left out, crouch very slight, right back ready to hit like a sledge. An' *both* were smilin'! Nevins wasn't no more nervous than I am now.

Jimmy jabs like lightnin' an' jumps away. Buck shakes his head an' starts shufflin' in, à la Jack Johnson. Jimmy jabs again. Buck sidles closer. Jimmy jabs twice an' crosses wit' his right kinder hard by way of warnin'—y'see, he didn't want to knock 'im out in the very first round. That wouldn't 've been fair to the spectators. But Nevins don't mind 'em at all. Then Buck jumps in; reg'lar bull-frog stunt that there jump was. Jimmy's right uppercut goes up like a thunderbolt—an' misses!

Say! Things start happenin' right there. This here Nevins uncorks an' lands a right an' left to the jaw that'd 've pulverized the Sp'inx. Then he steps back a few inches an' jolts a lightnin' left to the stomach an' a right hook to th' jaw, an'—

Jimmy Kelley goes down and out for the first time in his life!

Honest, I can't describe either how I felt or how the house went on. Buck Nevins helps pick Jimmy up an' carry 'im to 'is corner; then 'is friends pick *him* up, an' parade th' burg wit' 'im.

'Course, it was an accident; but it was a deuce of an accident. Jimmy's uppercut wouldn't miss once in fifty times, an' Nevins couldn't have landed that crusher on the jaw once in a million; but Jimmy'd been knocked out, an' it was all over but the shoutin'.

Jimmy comes to an' wants to fight Buck again right off; but the big man's manager, who's a pretty keen chap for a small town product, wont let 'em get together—an' the papers get hold of it.

I takes Jimmy back East wit' me an' puts him into a course of trainin' like y' read about. Then one night we goes to see Buck Nevins make his day-bew wit' a second-rater named Tony Petrano. Petrano slams Buck all around the ring for ten rounds an' gets th' newspaper decision. Then the next week I gets

Jimmy on wit' Petrano, an' the wop is knocked out in the fourth round. But still the newspapers wont shut up.

Then Nevins takes a ten-round lacin' from Kid Rivers, an' three weeks later Jimmy knocks out Rivers in the second round. An' still the papers keep on blabbin' about that Kenosha affair. It makes me wild, an' gives Vi'let fits. That Vi'let was a bird. Honest, I think Jimmy'd gone dippy if it hadn't been f'r her. She wanted Jimmy to fight Buck again, an' Jimmy wanted to—so I goes up to see Buck an' his manager.

I remember once years ago when Young Corbett won the featherweight championship from Terry McGovern. They got matched again, an' I talks to Corbett about the comin' fight.

"Say, look here," he says. "Maybe Terry's a better scrapper than I am; maybe he kin lick men who can lick me—but there's one man on earth who'll never lick me—an' that man is Terry McGovern. I've got the Indian sign on him!"

An' he had. The next time they got together Young Corbett won easier than he had the first time—an' I always did think that Terry was the better fighter.

But that's the sum an' substance of what Buck Nevins handed out to me.

"Sure I'll fight him," he says, easy an' confident, "'cause I'll never see the day w'en I can't lick him. I've got his number."

So Buck's manager an' me puts the newspaper guys wise, an' the managers start biddin' for the scrap. It wasn't Buck was such a drawin' card—him havin' been licked by Petrano an' Rivers—but Noo York loves somethin' new; an' they wanted to see Jimmy Kelley win out over the man who'd put the hooks to him by accident. It was a good card from the standpoint of gate receipts all right.

Jimmy was dead crazy f'r that bout. He couldn't 've trained harder if it'd been Larisey he was goin' up against.

For three rounds Jimmy slams Buck around that ring unmerciful. An' then in the fourt' round comes the fire-works. Nevins gets in close and duplicates the Kenosha stunt. An' Jimmy's knocked out again! Gawd!

Nevins told me after the fight w'en Noo York was gaspin' over it, he says: "I got the Indian sign on him, that's all. I'll always be ready to lick 'im." An' I believed 'im! Chee, I was sore!

Then Larisey gets mixed up in the New Haven and Hartford an' gets hurts which end up in an amputated arm—an' the world aint got no champeen. Jimmy Kelley, who'd have been the recognized champeen of the world then, couldn't be considered such, because Buck Nevins'd knocked him out twice. An' Jimmy c'd lick every other man in the world—as he'd proved. But neither was Buck the champeen—because there was a dozen who could knock him into kingdom come inside of ten rounds. Kid Rivers tried 'im again, an' finished 'im in nine rounds.

So there was this nice round world without no champeen. An' w'en I thought of them vaudeville chances which would ha' been ours if we hadn't never seen Kenosha—never did like that burg—I got sick.

But Jimmy was a pretty good card even yet; an' he started fighting once a month—an' whippin' 'em—say, he 'most killed 'em. But when anyone'd talk Buck Nevins to him, 'is eyes'd get that hunted look—

As I've said, neither Jimmy n'r Vi'let was strong on the social stuff, but w'en they give a benefit for the widdler of Knock-out Brennan—not a racket, a reg'lar benefit—they decided to go.

An' Buck Nevins was there.

An' Vi'let met 'im!

Jimmy was wit' her when she was introduced, but when he seen 'em together later in th' evenin'—an' then once again later on, talkin' away like ol' chums—an' more—the little green devils got 'im—an' he went out f'r an airin'. An' w'en he come back they were sittin' at the table—eatin' ice cream.

When Jimmy an' Vi'let an' me went home in a taxi that night, Jimmy Kelley wouldn't speak to her.

They must've had a devil of a time for a couple of days, 'cause on the third day Vi'let comes to me all red-eyed.

"Oh! Mister Davis," she pipes plaintive-like, "Jimmy's terrible. He wont speak to me at all; an' when I say anythin' he says 'Go tell it to Nevins.' I—"

So I pats her on the shoulder an' tells 'er it's all right, an' that Jimmy loves 'er, an' that a little jealousy's a good thing for a husband once in a while.

I buttonholes Jimmy.

"Jimmy," sez I, casual, "there's one thing in this world standin' between you an' a fortune: that's Buck Nevins."

"Don't talk to me about that dog!"

"How about ten rounds wit' 'im?" I asks.

"I'm on," he growls; an' I wondered—

Well, a man'll do a whole heap o' things w'en he's jealous of a guy that he'd never do if he was sane; an' I happened to be in the know on this deal. Y'see Vi'let has wised me up that she was friehds with the girl Buck was stuck on; an' that's w'at they'd been discussin' so earnest the night of the Brennan benefit. O' course, Jimmy, bein' a man, wouldn't ask f'r no explanation—an' Vi'let couldn't very well defend herself w'en she hadn't been accused in so many words.

Well, I challenges; an' Buck—confident, an' needin' the cush, accepts *pronto*. The bout's set f'r a month later, an' I takes Jimmy an' staff to a roadhouse beyond Westchester. An' durin' the month I manages to let Jimmy see Vi'let just enough to keep his jealousy ragin'.

*Crowd* wasn't the word for the push that swelled into the Garden for the battle. Y' remember the night the Frawley law went into effect in Noo York, an' Mat Wells an' Knock-out Brown got together in the Garden? Remember the men hangin' onto the rafters, an' seats sellin' for a two-hundred per cent advance; an' the reserves keepin' the crowd in line down Fourth an' Madison all the way up to Twenty-fourth Street? Well, that crowd wasn't even in the class wit' the bunch that came to see this go.

Jimmy was sullen and ugly in his dressin'-room before the fight. The semi-final went on, an' every time there'd be a yell from the crowd he'd grab me an' wanna know if it wasn't time f'r him to get into that ring. Win or lose, I knew I was goin' to see a scrap that night that'd make the world sit up an' take notice.





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Finally we streams into the arena an' climbs into the ring. I steps over to Dan Smiley, the refereee.

"Dan," I says, "hustle things along. Tell 'em to can half the introductions an' choke them long-winded guys who wants to make speeches. An' don't instruct 'em too much in the rules! Y'r goin' to referee a scrap to-night that'll make your mouth water."

"Humph!" he says, noddin'. Dan Smiley never was much on th' gab.

Well, they gets their instructions, Jimmy not darin' to let his eyes meet th' other man—an' Buck as cool as though he was—well, as though he was back in Tammany Hall eatin' ice cream wit' Vi'let an' lookin' as handsome.

They just barely touched gloves—Jimmy was too proud to let anyone know that there was anything personal about it. Then they stepped back—

There wasn't nothin' scientific about what happened then. Jimmy goes tearing in, them muscles playin' tag wi' each other up an' down 'is back—an' as he lights out wit' a right that'd have put the kibosh on a mule, I hear him say: "*Damn yuh!*" an' then I watched that swirl of arms an' legs an' tried to figure on how humans c'd stand that thing.

No, there wasn't nothin' clever about it; an' Buck was swept entirely back. The crowd gets up on chairs—them as wasn't standin' a'ready, an' there was thousands doin' that—an' tried to lift the roof off the Garden.

Buck staggers back, coverin', wit' Jimmy on top of him whalin' away wit' pile-drivin' lefts an' right; *slam, bang, biff*—an' he brings up sharp against the ropes, an' gets thrown back just in time to get a squasher in the stomach. The smile leaves him, an' he tries to cover.

Jimmy, his eyes shinin' unpleasant an' evil, holds him off kinder easy wit' his left, an' brings that right over like a streak—an' Nevins goes down. Did th' house yell? A-a-h! say—use y'r imagination!

Buck takes the rest period an' gets up. Immedjit he falls into a clinch.

"Yuh coward!" hisses Jimmy, an' wriggles loose. An' he uppercuts.

What an uppercut that was! Buck's

hands drop, an' he staggers to one side. He was out!

An' was that enough for Jimmy Kelley? Not on your life it wasn't. He wanted to disfigure that man—so he wouldn't have no more attractions as an ice-cream partner.

Before Dan Smiley can get over to 'em an' grab 'em Jimmy shoots a right an' a left plumb into Buck's face. Buck sorter spins—an' crumples!

An' they hail Jimmy as the world's heavyweight champ'!

I GOES home wit' Jimmy, havin' meanwhile 'phoned to Vi'let, who'd been cryin' an' worryin' her eyes out—'cause Vi'let had put me wise to a certain piece of news which an M. D. had verified. So on the way home I tells 'im what it was that Vi'let an' Buck'd been talkin' about—

"Whynell didn't you tell me that before?" he snaps.

"'Cause y'd been licked if you hadn't been jealous," I answers. Funny thing about that man. He was so glad about making up wit' Vi'let he forgot he was the champeen of the world.

We starts up the steps of his flat-house. Just before he opens his door, I grabs him by th' arm.

"Say Jimmy," I asks, innocent-like, "if it's a boy, what'll yuh name it?"

His eyes grow big—yuh'd never ha' thought he was the same man who'd been fightin' Buck Nevins that evenin'.

"Whatcha—whatcha—mean?" he croaks, an' digs them big fingers of his into my arms so I want to yell. "Whatcha mean?"

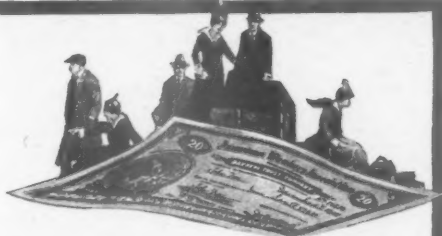
I nods.

He looks at me f'r a second; then seein' that I'm wise an' handed him a straight steer, he busts open the door—an' me, lookin' in, sees him an' Vi'let go into a clinch; an' hear her voice just sayin'—

"Oh! Jimsy—Boy!" An' then he smothers her again, an' pulls some stuff about "Little mother!"

Yeh! this love stuff is a great thing—sometimes. If I c'd ever meet the woman who'd make me forgit I was champeen of the world—

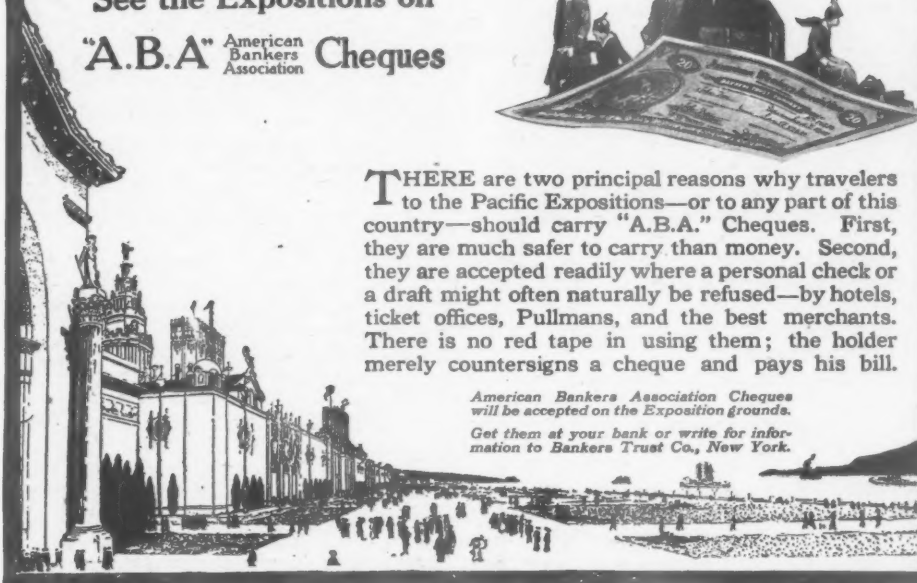
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# THE ISLAND OF SURPRISE

Continued from page 876 of this issue.

"Certainly."

With some difficulty he wrung a reluctant acquiescence from his father upon his solemn promise that he would join them at Kansas City.

"You see, Father, there are some business matters connected with—er—that book of mine that I must see to. I told Bob Dossner I would take it up with their Western agency. And there are one or two other important matters that I must clear up."

His father was so rejoiced at the fortunate meeting between the two young people and their evident understanding that he made no very decided objections.

THE last thing that Robert Lovell saw as the train rolled out of the station was Dorothy Cassilis carefully not looking at him from the observation platform of the private car. She was scarcely able to realize that she was actually going, after her repeated refusals; but she was glad that she was, though not for the world would she have Mr. Robert Lovell know that.

Lovell's business was soon over. After calling at the Western agency of the Dossner firm he paid a visit to the leading private detective agency of Chicago. He laid before them the scraps of paper, the torn telegram, he had brought from Miss Arden's rooms, and without telling them for what purpose he wanted the information and without allowing them any inkling of the strange relationship between them, he engaged the service of the agency to trace his wife. They were to telegraph him care of the yacht at San Francisco if they learned anything further, and at Honolulu, Samoa, Tahiti and various other ports in the South Seas with which there was cable connections. Indeed, it would not be difficult to reach the *Wanderer*, because Godfrey Lovell was so well known that his movements were matters of general concern.

Having made arrangements for a special which was guaranteed to overtake

the Limited at Kansas City, Lovell next drove to the hotel on the chance that there might be some mail for him. Again he was a person of sufficient consequence to have everything connected with him noted. The mail clerk recollected that Lovell's man had called just before the departure of the Limited and got what mail there was at that time. He also recalled that later in the evening another letter had come for him which the clerk had remailed to the yacht in San Francisco. Thinking it to be of importance, since it had a special delivery stamp on it, he had sent the boy to put it on the fast Burlington train for the coast, since the Santa Fe Limited had gone, and it would doubtless be waiting Mr. Lovell when he reached the *Wanderer*. The clerk could give him no information to enable him to identify the envelope, and the young man dismissed it from his mind.

The next morning the Santa Fe had made good its promise, for he arrived in Kansas City in time to exchange from the car he had chartered to that of his father. He found his father improved.

As they rolled across the green and fertile plains of Kansas the four older people indulged in bridge most of the time, and the two younger people played an older game. Robert Lovell played it with compunctions of conscience and heart, Miss Cassilis with a delightful zest in the pastime. The pretense that had marked their first meeting, that neither desired to carry out the plans of the elders and that both were irrevocably committed to defeat those plans, was still maintained.

While in Miss Cassilis' presence, Lovell could forget his wife, but she would obtrude herself when he was alone. This undecided young man found himself not quite so sure that there was no explanation of her sudden flight other than the damning one he had impulsively put upon it. He was not quite so sure that the decision to which he had so hastily

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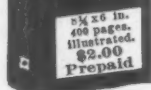
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come, to take steps to annul the marriage, was the one he wanted to arrive at after all. He almost regretted that he had put detectives on her trail. Yet he must have information as to her whereabouts. The uncertainty was maddening.

The first thing he did when he reached the car was to ask for the mail. He ran through it rapidly and was more disappointed than he cared to admit to find nothing from her. His mail was mostly second class matter and decidedly uninteresting. He did not even trouble to examine it further, and it lay unnoticed on the desk in his stateroom in the car.

Truly, for a man who for all of his life had been free from care and anxiety, he had become involved in the most perplexing and annoying problems since the fatal hour at which he arrived at the climax of his novel. He almost wished he had never written a book.

THE Limited was delayed by a wash-out and did not reach Oakland until late at night. The whole party, with the exception of Robert Lovell, boarded the yacht. He had some college friends in San Francisco who claimed him for the evening. A young officer whom he had never seen before met him at the gangway when he finally went aboard the *Wanderer*.

"Yes, sir," he said, "Mr. Lovell and his party arrived safely. They went to their cabins immediately."

Young Mr. Lovell had been expected; his cabin was all ready for him.

"I presume," he said, addressing the young first officer, whose name, he learned, was Mattern, "that I have the cabin that I always occupy?"

"The same one, sir," answered young Mattern, saluting and resuming his watch.

Mr. Lovell did not arise for breakfast with the family. They took that meal without him and left the yacht for purchasing errands. Even the two financiers got into a car and motored away.

The yacht was to sail at four o'clock with the tide, and the steward had been instructed not to serve luncheon until the party came aboard. But Robert did not wait for them. He finished his luncheon alone, lighted his cigar, ran up

the companionway and went on deck.

The crew were busy getting various supplies aboard. Mr. Mattern, who had the watch again, nodded to him but kept on with his work. Idly surveying the long stretch of white deck in front of him, Robert Lovell presently turned and started aft. He had taken but two steps when out from the lee of the mizzenmast stepped a tall white figure, and he stood face to face with his wife!

## CHAPTER X

### MR. LOVELL IS AGAIN SPEECHLESS

REFLECTING whimsically that fate was always bringing him face to face with some woman and then depriving him of speech, Robert Lovell could only exchange stares with his wife as he had exchanged stares with Miss Cassilis a few days before. After the first shock, it was with a distinct sense of joy and relief,—which should have evidenced to him his real anxiety and true affection for the woman before him,—that he put out his hand. His lips broke into a smile and he started toward her.

There could not be anything wrong. She was there. He saw it all in an instant. Godfrey Lovell had telegraphed her, and she had gone the instant she had received the message. He had been jealous of his own father. He had misjudged her. There was, to be sure, her failure to notify him to be explained, but in his present mood he was certain that some satisfactory reason for that would be forthcoming and all would be well. For the moment this vacillating young man forgot Miss Cassilis, his purpose of annulment, the detectives he had put on her trail. He was prepared to receive the lady with open arms as became a husband.

The lady, it appeared, was of another mind. She met his stare with level gaze. She overlooked his outstretched hands. She ignored his smile. She turned a deaf ear to the words with which he finally addressed her. In fact, she drew herself up to her full height, and it seemed to him that he had never been so conscious of that perfect figure before; and without a word, a look, a gesture, she slowly



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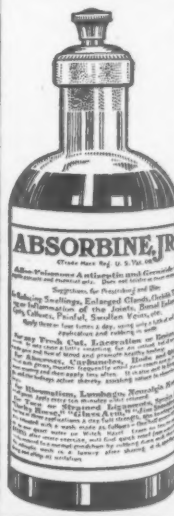
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and deliberately turned her back on him and walked aft.

A broad-shouldered young man was hanging over the rail aft staring at the shore. As Robert Lovell stood rooted to the deck, more surprised if possible than he had been by the meeting, Miss Arden stopped by the side of the young man and engaged in what might be characterized without undue exaggeration as ardent conversation.

Mr. Lovell's feelings were well summarized by the following terse if inelegant remark.

"Well, I'll be damned!"

There was more truth than appeared in that remark, because Mr. Lovell bade fair to get into almost inextricable difficulties between the two women. If only he had not been so precipitate in sending that telegram and committing Dorothy Cassilis to the cruise. He never imagined that Dorothy Arden would be aboard. For that matter, if he had only not been so precipitate in marrying Dorothy Arden! Both conditions were beyond change now. The situation had to be faced somehow. But how? He could not see just yet.

Following his habit of prompt decision, he went directly aft.

"Good morning, Miss Arden," he said suavely.

In the presence of a third party she could do no less than acknowledge this salutation, but she did it with a most indifferent bow. She had fallen so easily into his hands before, that he was unprepared for the rebuff. It piqued him, although he confessed that he had never seen her look more alluring.

She had discarded the solemn black she wore in the office. She was clad in a yachting suit of white, trimmed with blue, which was exquisitely appropriate to her dark beauty. The brisk air of the morning had brought rare touches of color to her cheeks. Her eyes had lost their calm repose. Instead of cool shadows he saw lambent flames and sparkles of angry resentment in their depths.

Robert would have given much to have her alone; although whether he would have taken her in his arms and kissed her in that event, or have given her a good shaking, he could not be quite

sure. But she was not alone, very much not so. The young gentleman whose broad shoulders and height almost matched Lovell's was there—decidedly so. Lovell stared in obvious inquiry. His wife's clear, exquisitely modulated voice, which she strove to render as passionless as ever, and with sufficient success to deceive almost anyone but a jealous husband, made the introduction.

"Mr. Lovell, this is Dr. Elverson, who has agreed to make the cruise with us to look after your father."

"I am glad to meet you, Doctor," said Lovell in anything but an enthusiastic and happy voice.

"The pleasure is mine," returned the Doctor with equal fervor and joy.

"You are from San Francisco, I presume?"

"On the contrary, from New York. Dr. Schenck was kind enough to recommend me to your father, and as I have not been feeling very fit lately I thought a sea voyage would be most agreeable."

"Yes," said Miss Arden coolly, "we came from New York together."

"Oh, you did?"

"I was so fortunate," interposed the Doctor suavely.

"I should have been very lonely on the journey," continued Miss Arden, "had it not been for the kind offices of Dr. Elverson."

"It was most good of him," said Lovell with cutting emphasis, not looking at the Doctor but directly at Miss Arden, "to take such care of Miss Arden. I am sure my father will be duly grateful."


"He so expressed himself this morning before he left," said Miss Arden composedly.

"I beg pardon, Mr. Lovell," young Mattern called out, "but the shore party is coming off now."

The *Wanderer* had drawn out in mid-stream, and the power launch was fast approaching the side.

"Thank you."

"I learned last night," continued the lady with an air of the most suspicious indifference, "about your meeting with Miss Cassilis under such peculiar and romantic circumstances and of your agreeable journey across the continent. Your father was quite full of it."




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Was this an explanation of the lady's coldness, Lovell asked himself. He hoped so, for there was something soothing to his wounded pride in the thought. Well, he decided that he would punish his wife for her coldness, for her lack of trust in him. So with a slight bow, he proceeded to the gangway and received Miss Cassilis with great *empressement*.

THE afternoon was still young. Robert had intended to go ashore for some final purchases, but on sudden impulse he postponed his departure until after the newcomers had eaten their luncheon. Miss Arden and the Doctor, it seemed, had already partaken of their luncheon, for they did not appear at the table with the others; but she at least was well within ear-shot, he took care to observe, when he invited Miss Cassilis to accompany him on this final run ashore. Not even the assiduous attentions of the Doctor could quite drive the frown from Miss Arden's brow as she saw them enter the motor launch and proceed rapidly to shore.

The pair evidently had a good time, for they got back just in time to allow the launch to be hoisted to its chocks amidships before the yacht weighed anchor and got under way.

Not until they had passed out of the Golden Gate, which he and Miss Cassilis surveyed from one quarter while the Doctor and Miss Arden stared at it from another, did Mr. Lovell go below. As he entered his stateroom he found that the little pile of mail had been increased by a letter and a telegram put aboard at the last minute.

The letter was from his wife. At first he thought she had written it on the

yacht, but it was post-marked at St. Louis, had been addressed to Chicago and forwarded therefrom.

He opened the letter to find it full of reproaches because he had not written or telegraphed in answer to her previous communication. With this as a clue he searched the pile of letters again and found that in his hurry he had overlooked another letter in her handwriting which had become folded under an advertising circular and which told him what he had divined, that his father had summoned her to make the cruise and that she was going via St. Louis as she could make a little quicker time and as she had some business to transact for Godfrey Lovell in that city.

That was the business part of the letter. The rest of it was full of rejoicing that they were not to be separated. There were directions for him to write or telegraph her at various places, and she dwelt upon how ardently she hoped to hear from him. These letters explained everything but Dr. Elverson.

Then he opened the telegram. It was from the detective agency. It read:

Party for whom we were to search arrived in San Francisco day before yesterday and has boarded the yacht *Wanderer*, probably in some disguise. Wire further instructions.

He laughed as he read the message. What a fool he had been!

He promised himself an interesting interview with his wife, for the moment eliminating from his mind all thought of the other girl. And yet she had a place in his affairs and was no more lightly to be dismissed than the other woman.

**Just how important Miss Cassilis was to become is developed in the next installment of "The Island of Surprise." It will be in the April issue of The Red Book Magazine, on the news-stands March 23rd.**



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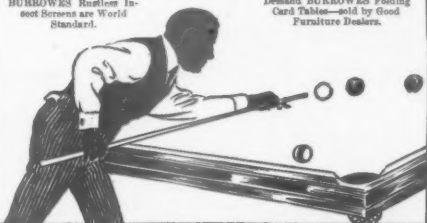
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*Don't fretulate, then I have a feeling that in this letter-writing of ours there's at last something new under the sun. Married, we could never have so keenly enjoyed it—divorced, we can do any rate, I can—knowing, and so, that no matter how personal we get, no matter how intimately we write, we are forever separated and free. There can't be any question about that of course, and equally of course we are both glad there can't be. Don't you call the situation rather poignant?*

# Blue Book Magazine

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THE NEWS-STANDS

## EMPTY POCKETS—by Rupert Hughes

*Continued from page 942 of this issue.*

### II

AT about this time, Red Ida in full flight reached New Jersey by way of the under-river route.

Red Ida had known her man well enough to know that he would suspect her first of all. Her fear of the police and her sorrow for Muriel, perhaps her jealousy of her, had swept her to the terrific deed of telling Perry Merithew what she knew.

The moment she saw him leave the cabaret, she had repented her caprice, longed to gulp back the words. She could not finish her song. She mumbled excuses to leave, dashed for her hat and her cloak and ran to the subway, looking like an escaped masquerader. Perhaps she could get home in time to warn her husband. He would kill her but she might save him.

In Allen Street she learned from excited crowds that a sensational taxicab battle had begun outside her tenement and rolled north. The sensation lost nothing in repetition.

Whether Shang came off victor or victim, she could not know. But she knew that she was done for as his wife. She ran to her flat and began to hurl into the suit-case all her properties, pitifully few and tawdry.

She dreaded every moment to hear Shang come in. Her last glance about the room reminded her of his stock of drugs. Those were his ammunition. Without them his pursuit and his brain would be hampered. She emptied all the powders into the sink and washed them away, exorcising countless demons thereby. Then she hobbled along the streets, lugging her baggage till she reached a station of the Tube. A train carried her under the river into New Jersey.

Now she had leisure to ponder on her estate.

She had not paused to collect her wages of song at the cabaret. She had little in her purse and little to pawn. She remembered with sorrow her hus-

band's promise that as soon as he had collected the ransom for Muriel Schuyler, he would string her with diamonds till she looked like Luna Park at night.

She had cut herself out of that. She had broken up her home, thwarted her husband's loftiest ambition and put him in jeopardy—and for what? in order to save a multi-billionaire from having to spend a hundred thousand dollars, which he would miss about as much as his finger-nail parings!

Ida began to reproach herself for cowardice, infidelity, treachery and imbecility. She called her soul before her soul and condemned it with the most scathing terms in her vocabulary.

"You big boob, you! You poor simp, you mut, you snitch, you piker! Oh, Gawd, what a boob I been!"

Here was a drastic instance of the complexities of life and virtue: two highly immoral people, a man of luxury and a woman of squalor, had collaborated in the rescue of an innocent girl. They should have been greeted with angelic music, flowers and strange exultation. Already they were ashamed of their good deeds, rewarded with disapproval, and tangled in problems that were to grow steadily knottier, until Perry Merithew should be found dead in the slums and Red Ida pursued into a scene of splendor and arrested for his murder.

### CHAPTER XXVIII

#### I

THE morning papers had already gone to press when Perry Merithew informed the police that Muriel Schuyler was safe. Every paper advertised her on the front page as a vanished heiress, kidnaped by street-buccaneers plying under the piratical little flag in the clock of a taxicab.

At eight o'clock that morning Jacob Schuyler's yacht reached New York. On the way to the uptown landing-place it



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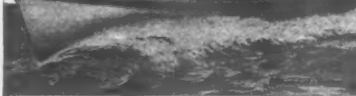
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paused long enough in the Bay to send ashore for the newspapers.

When the papers arrived Jacob Schuyler and his wife were eating a poor folk's breakfast of oatmeal and eggs in the sumptuous dining-room of their sea-going château. Jacob glanced at the front page as usual before turning to the financial columns inside. He was about to move his eyes on when he paused, studied the headlines again and gasped with such pain and dread that his wife ran round the table to him, thinking he had a stroke of apoplexy. The stewards set down their trays with a thump and closed in. But it was only Jacob's tongue that was paralyzed. His hand was palsied. He held up an aspen newspaper and pointed with a stuttering forefinger to the dancing lines:

### **MURIEL SCHUYLER KIDNAPED!**

**Young Daughter of Jacob Schuyler Carried Off By Desperate Gangsters in Bullet-Riddled Taxicab**

### **POLICE OUTWITTED AND OUTFOUGHT**

**Several Bystanders Shot Down—Officer Lowber and Chauffeur Sbarra Not Expected to Live**

### **HEIRESS' WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN; GRAVE FEARS FOR HER SAFETY**

The art of the headline builder consists in breaking news as ungently as possible. His work is not meant for the eyes of the victim's parents. But it was from headlines that the Schuylers learned of Muriel's adventure, and had no inkling of her comfortable security. Every paper seemed to add some new anguish to their eyes.

Jacob Schuyler and his wife were thoroughbreds trained to absorb shocks, but this struck them through the love of their child. They clung together in common and mutual terror like two children lost in the wood. Their hearts were both crying: "My poor child! my poor child!" and his was also crying "My poor wife!" and hers, "My poor husband!"

There is an ancient idiocy permeating fiction and public pretence: that the rich do not love or care for their children as the poor do; that the rich prefer lap-dogs and leave their unwelcomed offspring to liveried servants while the poor unanimously devote their entire lives to their young. As if generalized slanders or flatteries were ever worth the ink or the wind it takes to express them!

The Schuylers and the Angelilli were alike in family passion. They both adored their young and could hardly endure the mere thought of their suffering.

Muriel's mother had borne her as other children are borne: she had given her blood, her milk, her tears and her love to her daughter. Of course she was stricken at the picture of her danger. She went up and down beating her palms together in frantic bewilderment, then flung herself on the lounge, frightened beyond weeping. Her weakness was the strength of Jacob. He had to be strong for her sake and in behalf of his lost ewe-lamb. He had to pretend a confidence he did not feel.

Money now stepped up in all its glorious panoply, its ever readiness to help with the whole versatility of its enablements.

The distraught mother was too heavy for the bulky Jacob to lift, but his heart was the same for her as when, tall and slim and athletic, he had picked up the delicate wisp she was and carried her like a child. Now he was cumbrous and rusty in caresses, but he motioned the stewards and maids out and lifted her till he could sit by her and hold her in his fat arms and pat her Bible-back and mumble:

"Don't you worry, honey. I'll have her home to you in a jiffy. I'll spend a million—ten million—to run down that pack of wolves. Or if they want a ransom, I'll pay 'em all I've got."

His wife knew as well as he did that money was not omnipotent. She voiced the fears that had been sickening him.

"But suppose she has been killed! One of the police might have shot her. Or the gunmen might have stabbed her or beaten her to death to keep her from screaming. They may have thrown her

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out by the roadside somewhere, or down the Palisades. She may be lying wounded now in some horrible ditch. They may have flung her into the river. Her body, her pretty little body may be—oh, Jacob, Jacob, Jacob! Oh my baby, my little girl, my little baby girl!"

He tried to comfort her, but her panic was catching him by the throat. He rose in his might and set his teeth and his fists and said: "I'll have her here in an hour!" She wanted to follow him, but her knees could not uphold her.

Jacob ran out on the deck, down the ladder to the launch, and ordered full speed ahead. The only vehicle he found ashore was an anachronistic hansom. He plunged in and ordered the man to gallop to his office. Arrived there, he hurried down the corridor of the building and ordered the elevator man not to stop at any floor but his.

In the corridor above, he flushed a covey of reporters. They clamored about him, chattering: "May I ask—" "Can you tell—" "Did the—" "Is it true—" But he pressed right through, storming "Nothing say! Absolutely nothing say!"

He was calling out orders as he entered his suite of offices:

"Send for Pinkerton! and Burns! Get Commissioner of Police on the wire! Get District Attorney on another wire! Get my lawyer! Get me a motor car! A fast one! Where's Chivot! Where in God's name is Chivot!"

In his own office Mr. Chivot heard him coming. Before Jacob could begin on him, Mr. Chivot had said:

"She's safe, sir. Good morning!"

"Wha-at?"

"Miss Muriel just telephoned in, sir. She said for you not to worry."

Jacob dropped into his chair and swiveled to and fro idiotically. His anxieties had collapsed under him.

"Where is she?" he asked. "At home?"

"No, sir. Miss Schuyler is at—she didn't say, sir, just where, but she gave me the number. I'll get it, sir."

"Did she ask for a ransom—or anything? Where's my check-book? How much cash have we got?"

"Oh, no, sir—pardon me!—ah, hello! yes, is this—one moment, please."

He set the magic instrument before

old Jacob, and Jacob groaned into the transmitter one husky "Hello?" He got back a lilt of youth and love:

"Hello-o Daddy! Bless your darling old heart. And Mother—how's Mother? —Hello—hello—hello—oh, dear! I'm cut off. Hello!"

Jacob had dropped the telephone and was blubbering into his elbow like the overgrown cub he always was where his child was concerned.

Even Mr. Chivot's eyes resembled marbles with dew on them, and his important Adam's apple went up and down between the ropes.

He had the omnipresence of mind to take up the telephone and speak to the distracted Muriel. Before he could make her understand who he was, she stormed at him: "Get off the wire—I'm talking! —please—go away! Oh, it's you! What's the matter with my father? Where is he? Why doesn't he speak to me?"

"He—he is crying," said Mr. Chivot. It was one of the few blunt and undiplomatic statements he had ever made. He was punished instantly: for Muriel set up a howl at the other end of the line. Between the two of them, poor Chivot!

Jacob speedily shamed himself into self-control, nodded Chivot out of the room and began with fine recovery to berate Muriel for giving him and her mother such a scare.

"Well I like that!" she answered with the gift of anger she had inherited. "I suppose you're disappointed because I got away from those awful men."

This brought Jacob to terms at once. He poured out love-speeches like a suppliant till he had her pacified. Then he asked her to go home, and promised that he would join her there as soon as he could collect her mother. Muriel refused to go home and indicated that she was a fugitive from publicity: "wanted" by the reporters. Jacob knew that no wealth could bribe that army. He told her to wait an hour, then put on a veil, and take a taxicab to one of the up-river piers whence he would have her brought off to the yacht.

Then he waved aside a dozen important problems, wedged through the tackling reporters, motored back to his

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launch, and went out to his yacht, flaunting a gleeful handkerchief to the forlorn woman at the rail, and shouting across the high-shouldered waves at the slashing prow:

"It's all right, Mother. It's all right. The baby is safe. It's all right."

## II

**I**F Muriel complained that life was inartistic and badly constructed since it did not permit Doctor Worthing to rescue her, what were Doctor Worthing's thoughts? He had begun the hunt for her, battled for her, risked his life for her only to have his taxi-charger expire under him. He was taken up as a mere passenger in Winnie Nicolls' racer, and learned that he had wealth for a rival. At that, they could only overtake the gangster's taxi when it was burned out and abandoned.

While they stood nonplused by the apparent evaporation of its passengers, the owner of the stolen limousine came forth and began to emit yelps of rage at the loss of his car and his chauffeur. Being only the owner he could not, of course, remember the license number.

Nicolls whirled his big racer about and took up the vain pursuit; for a pursuit can hardly succeed when one does not know what one is pursuing nor which way it has gone. He darted frantically up this street and down that, like a greyhound that has lost the scent. Eventually Patrolman Grebe telephoned to Headquarters and learned what Merithew had telephoned. They ran up to Spuyten Duyvil and verified the limousine. There was the least possible satisfaction in that. The only comfort was that they made mutual company in their misery, the policeman, the millionaire and the surgeon.

Sunrise was just unrolling its crimson ribbons beyond the eastern roofs when Worthing got to bed. A dull fury of resentment at his luck and envy of the anonymous rescuer of his idol tortured him with remorse as for a crime, the crime of missing a climax.

He had lost Muriel and probably his job at Bellevue as well. His poor consolation was that it was not much of a

job. As he was sinking into a sleep of exhaustion, he remembered that he had arranged to be present at the operation on Happy Hanigan. Doctor Eccleston had granted him the privilege. He remembered also that Muriel had promised to be present, too, and hold the boy's hand when he went under the anæsthetic. Of course she would not be there, after such an adventure, especially as she never kept engagements; but she ought to be represented.

He soused his weary frame in a cold tub, then pushed it into his clothes and trundled it to Eccleston's private hospital. Muriel was not there of course, and Worthing proceeded to prepare himself for the rites of operation in the Levitical robes of the surgeon.

Eccleston was all agog over the morning papers but he had not told Happy Hanigan of Muriel's adventure. The boy had excitement enough to occupy him.

Worthing explained to Happy that Muriel was too busy to come. The boy tried to smother back his overpowering disappointment, but he failed. He sighed:

"And I t'ought she was one dame what a guy could bank on her woid. But I guess all skoits is alike. Lemme hold your hand, Doc; us men has gotta stick togedder."

He gripped Worthing's triply sterilized fingers, and the anæsthetist was about to put the candle-snuffer over his face when there was a tap on the door and Doctor Worthing was called out to the waiting room, where a densely veiled woman stood.

Before she lifted the veil, Worthing gasped: "Muriel! Miss Schuyler!"

A hand shot out to his, and a muffled whisper came from the clouds:

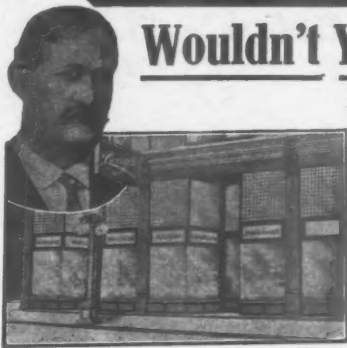
"Hush! I'm in disguise."

She explained her fear of the police and the press and her purposed flight to her father's yacht.

"Then why did you risk coming here?" he asked.

"Because I promised to hold Happy's hand, and I—I had to see you and tell you how wonderful you were and how grateful I am."

"Grateful?—for what?"



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"Do you think that?" he sighed ecstatically.

"I know it. I could hear the wretches talk, couldn't I? They didn't gag my ears. And I heard you call to me. That saved me from dying of despair!"

"Muriel!" he cried, catching her hand again.

She chuckled. "I've forgotten your first name, I'm afraid. I only heard it once. It's Clinton, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"It's a rather cold name, isn't it? It's one of those first names made over out of a last name."

"Call me anything you like."

"I'll have to think up something."

A stern-faced nurse appeared like a gorgon to ruin the tête-à-tête, with the grim message:

"The surgeons are waiting."

"Good heavens, and I haven't seen Happy."

"Better not tell him about your adventure."

He led her into Happy's room, where the boy lay waxen white, all swaddled and bound for the altar knives. He rolled to his side and shouted:

"Dere she is! Dere's me best goil! Dese guys was sayin' you was too busy to come but I never mistrusted you."

It was a gallant and chivalrous lie.

Muriel had been preparing an elaborate speech of bon voyage to Happy on his cruise, but the anæsthetist interposed:

"I'm sorry, but Doctor Eccleston is very busy this morning."

"All right, all right!" said Happy, severely, then turned his wistful face to Muriel. "Don't you care, sweetheart; dese stoigeons is just achin' to git deir hands on me. Doc Woithin's tellin' me dey's goin' to toin me into such a woik of art dat dey'll be usin' me in de movies. We'll have time enough to talk after I come troo de sausage machine. Good-by and much ubliged."

Muriel bent down and kissed him and left hasty tears of hers upon his face.

He clenched his rough little talons about her soft fingers and nodded to the anæsthetist:

"Go to it, Doc, and douse me glim."

Muriel tried not to shiver as the cone was pressed over his face. Happy wriggled out from under it at once for a last comment:

"Say, dis damn perfumery remines me of de Gas House Districk where I foist met you—rememmer? Goo' by!"

Then he accepted the cone and obeyed the murmurous command to "breathe in deeply." The little bellows of his scrawny chest rose and fell in an impatient eagerness as he gulped down the vapor of annihilation.

Muriel breathed with him and kept sending messages of courage through her fingers into his. He answered clasp for clasp with a slow diminuendo of power, till at length his hand lay inert in hers and he was at peace.

It was she that was filled with the dread of the sharp instruments, and terrified with wonderment where his soul was hovering, while its tenement was invaded and repaired. They wheeled his body out in the little white tumbril, followed by the executioners in their robes. Doctor Worthing dared not shake hands even with her, but he lingered to beg her not to wait.

"It may be a long time, and it will seem much longer."

"But I must know what happens," she pleaded. "I must be here when he comes back—if he does."

"But he will suffer a good deal, you know, and he will think he suffers more than he does."

"If he can stand it, I ought to be able to," she answered.

He yielded to her lovable stubbornness and left her.

She spent the interval upon a rack of torture. She paced the floor of the waiting room, read books and magazines and watched the maddeningly deliberate hands of the clock. She felt in her own flesh the steels that were searching Happy's body.

She had not seen the morning papers and had not dreamed that she would be starred in them as the headliner of the day. She came across a copy of one of

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them, and the sight of her name in big type shocked Happy from her thoughts for a time. She took alarm anew at the thought of finding herself co-starred in to-morrow's papers with Perry Merithew. She imagined an army of reporters hunting for her; she imagined herself the captive of the police; and a girlish desire to hide threw her into a panic.

THE return of the somber procession with the reconstructed shell of Happy Hanigan drove herself out of her thoughts, and she took his limp hand again and held it while the soul resumed the body, and strength flowed back into the fingers. Only now he was returning into pain and nausea and cruelly enforced repose.

Worthing tried to assure her that the distressful outcries were the mere babblings of delirium, but she could not make any comforting distinction between a soul that only thought it was hurt and a soul that knew it was hurt.

She blamed herself now for bringing these anguishes upon the boy, and she doubted the assurances that the operation was a brilliant success. She was more afraid now of the reality of recovered life than of the occult terrors of anaesthesia. She had no bravery to lend the boy, and wept till he recovered wisdom enough to understand and courage enough to pretend he was not suffering.

He brought his old time grin into play and laughed hollowly:

"It was de gas was hollerin', not me. I'm feelin' so fine I t'ink I'll take a ride if you got your ottermobile handy."

Everybody collaborated with Happy to deceive the nerve-shattered girl, and she was evicted from the room with enough illusions to sustain her.

Doctor Worthing begged her to go home and rest, and she explained again why she dared not and why she was bound for her father's yacht. She did not mention Perry Merithew by name, but his manly intuition seized upon it at once, and he groaned:

"The man is everywhere!"

The curious smile of pride she took in his jealousy was the last he saw before she wrapped her black veil about her face.

He insisted on riding with her to the dock where the launch from the yacht was waiting. She invited him to take dinner there with her, and he needed no urging.

He turned away once more the victim of hope.

### III

WHEN Muriel ran up the ladder to the deck of the yacht, she hugged and kissed her father and the maids and shook hands with the servants and the crew.

Then she settled down to rhapsodize the long epic of her adventure before an audience that copied the rapturous terror of children hearing a beautiful ogre story.

Mrs. Schuyler wept splendidly and Jacob stormed and shuddered and swore that she should never be out of their sight again. Muriel said she never wanted to be. One says such things at such times.

Perry Merithew's instinct had been true. The very mention of his name sobered the Schuylers. As Muriel described her cruise through midnight New York, they listened as it were with a lilt and a vivid sense of speed and danger. When she reached the point of her rescue, and told how she stepped out of the stolen limousine, they were jigging with excitement. But when she finished with a flourish:

"And who do you suppose it was that rescued me? You'll never guess! Mr. Perry Merithew!"

Their eagerness stopped like a car whose front axle breaks. It was sickening.

"Oh, no!" Mrs. Schuyler groaned.

"Agh!" Jacob snarled.

With the cantankerousness of human nature, Muriel, who had not yet forgiven Perry Merithew for rescuing her, felt the injustice of her parent's ingratitude, and rushed to his defense:

"Oh, he was perfectly charming about it. He told me that we must keep out of sight of the reporters. He protected me in every way."

"It was the least he could have done!" Jacob sneered.

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Muriel did not waste her time heroizing Perry Merithew before that hostile audience, but its injustice set her heart towards mercy for him. To appease her father and mother, she minimized the rôle he played and maximized the share of Doctor Worthing.

This seemed to please them no better. If she could have known what Winnie Nicolls tried to do, his name would have pleased her mother. But Doctor Worthing meant nothing to Mrs. Schuyler. To Jacob he meant the young man who had aided and abetted Muriel's slumming insanity. Also he meant the uneasiness a father feels at finding the male and romantic element cropping up increasingly in his daughter's chronicles.

He was sinking into a state of hopeless gloom when Muriel lifted him to the clouds with an explosion of undreamed of sanity:

"Daddy, I can't face the music. I want to go to Europe for a long while. I'm afraid of the police, and I can't stand this sort of thing."

She caught up the sheaf of morning papers and spread them out. On all of them her name in huge type out-flaunted the day's murderers, embezzlers, politicians and other victims of accident.

In other times and places the young unmarried woman, the bachelette, was guarded zealously from the public eye and the public gossip. In these days her name may suddenly be promulgated on a billion newspapers. She may find herself the helpless object of international blazonry.

Muriel had done no wrong. She had suffered wrong. Yet she must be punished like a criminal. She must be besieged and questioned by the police, set up in a witness box and cross-examined by hostile lawyers, interpreted, imagined, misquoted and misrepresented by the reporters, offered up as a subject for cynical guess-work, stood on a high pillory with the fierce yellow light of journalism beating on her.

A modest, well-bred maiden on an errand of mercy, she had fallen among

a pack of wolves; escaped from them, she was to be forced to play Lady Godiva with a brass band ahead and nobody staying within doors.

The publicity was outrageous enough in any case, but Jacob revolted at the thought of seeing his daughter's name bracketed in the newspapers with Perry Merithew's. Perry Merithew was the main trouble, and the only ray of light in the whole miserable business was Muriel's willingness to escape. Nowadays parents with inconvenient daughters do not slam them into convents for refuge; they send them to Europe.

Jacob was rejoiced. He ventured a compliment—a kind of backhanded compliment:

"Muriel, my child, it's the first sensible idea I've heard from you for weeks. I congratulate you. There is hope for you yet."

Muriel winked at her mother. They always shared the amusement or the anxiety or anger Jacob occasioned. Jacob hustled on:

"If you go abroad on one of the steamers, you would be at the mercy of everybody. Those liners are about as private as Broadway. We'll take the yacht. I've a few things to attend to, and I'll be ready."

"I've a few things to attend to myself," said Muriel.

"Clothes, of course," Jacob growled, with the ancient masculine despair at woman's inability to undertake any enterprise without refitting:

"No, I've got clothes enough."

Jacob pretended to swoon: "I've lived to hear a woman say that! Or am I having hallucinations?"

Muriel and her mother exchanged wireless signals again. Muriel went on:

"You can telephone home to have the trunks packed and smuggled aboard. I've got to have a heart-to-heart talk with that darling of a Doctor Worthing. I've invited him to dinner. I've got to see that the poor Balinsky girl doesn't get deported, and I've got to pay a proper respect to poor Mr. Merithew. If it hadn't been for Perry Merithew the boy might never have come home. If it hadn't been for Perry Merithew I might never have come home. How can he be bad



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when he does so much good that good people might have done and didn't?"

Jacob was so bewildered by this that he took refuge in a desk-clearing evasion: "I don't have to decide who's good and who's bad. I'm not God, thank God!"

Muriel and her mother gasped at the sacrilege.

"Anyway," said Muriel, "we've all got to be polite to Mr. Merithew."

"No," said Jacob; "I don't have to judge him, but neither do I have to entertain him."

"You get him mad and he'll tell on me," Muriel threatened. This argument went home. Jacob surrendered.

"All right. Give him a meal and get rid of him."

Mrs. Schuyler suggested: "You might have him and your doctor for dinner to-night and finish them both off at once."

Muriel looked canny: "Have both my beaux here at the same time? Not much!"

Jacob snorted: "Don't! Don't talk about those men sentimentally or I'll throw them both overboard."

Muriel laughed like a child at a circus at being able to excite such floundering wrath with such a gentle prod:

"All righty, Jacob," she said. "Keep your flannels on!"

"The impudence of children nowadays is appalling," her father groaned. "Disobedience isn't enough—they've got to add insult to indifference."

Muriel's answer was to lift his arm, place it around her waist, seat herself on the arm of his chair and twist his resisting neck till she could make a face directly in his face, then kiss him on the tip of his nose.

It was the supreme impertinence with which she always crowned her presumptions, and it always made him so ferociously ridiculous that he always surrendered with the indignant laughter of a boy whose ribs are tickled.

## CHAPTER XIX

PERRY MERITHEW had not had many secrets whose publication would have been to his credit. Life took him no more seriously than he took life. A kind

of joke was played on him now in the fact that the most creditable thing about the most creditable feat he ever achieved, was the fact that he recognized the importance of keeping it a secret. That same kind of sarcasm hounded him to his death.

But while he was willing, determined even, to hush up the grandeur of his achievement, he was none the less hungry, all the more hungry, to accept a few whispered thanks and congratulations from the one most intimately involved.

He congratulated himself on his double victory over police and press. He had succeeded in fooling everybody; not a soul knew or suspected. Then his telephone rang. He rashly answered it himself—a thing he could rarely afford to do. His non-committal "Well?" evoked a strident:

"That you, Perry boy?"

"Oh—er—ah—yes, how are you, Pet?"

"Punk, thanks. Just able to sit up and eat a bite. I say, old dear, run down to lunch with me at the Vanderbilt. I'm buying."

"Thanks, but I've—"

"Another engagement? Break it!"

"Can't."

"Better come." This was in a darker tone, with a trace of threat.

"Sorry, but—"

Her loud voice went lower:

"It's about the mysterious rescuer of Muriel Sch—"

"I'll come!" he hastened to say. The voice grew loud again:

"That's the boy! The Della Robbia room at one."

"I'll be there, thank you, damn you!"

He heard the odious racket of her laughter; it crackled in his ears like the ululation of a victorious *Lorelei*. He slammed the receiver on the hooks and cursed her fervently.

HE delayed his departure for the Hotel Vanderbilt till the last moment, and still no word from Muriel. Fearing that she would telephone in his absence, he did what he almost never did: left word with his man where he was to be.

He found Pet waiting, and they descended the steps to the cellar *de luxe*,

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where Pet had reserved a table in the deepest nook.

When the head-waiter offered Perry the card, Pet took it from him:

"It's my lunch, Umberto. Two of my cocktails—you remember? and don't put in that sweet gin again or you'll hear from me."

Without consulting Perry she ran through the order. When the head-waiter had sent the waiters flying, and taken himself off, Perry groaned:

"I can't eat all that stuff. I just had breakfast."

"But they say the way to a man's heart is via his tūm. And I'm on my way."

"Are you planning to stop there or go on to my pocket-book? How much and what for?"

"Perry darling, when you're so very nice I know you mean to refuse. You're one of those who always put sugar on the quinine and quinine on the sugar. But this is business. I've got something to sell that you want to buy."

"Yes?"

"Silence."

"That seems to be your principal stock in trade lately. What do you think you know now?"

"I know who saved Muriel Schuyler."

"Really? Tell me! It seems to be quite a mystery. Why don't you notify the police or the papers?"

"I thought I'd better ask your permission first. Of course I recognized your fine Italian hand. You knew where she was to be taken. You started out to find her."

"So did Winnie Nicolls, and perhaps he—"

"Oh no he didn't. I asked him, and he nearly wept when he said it wasn't his luck."

"Well."

"Anybody but you would have swagged all over the place."

"Why not me?"

"Because you have your own secrets with little Muriel. Money passes between you at dances; you know where she is kidnaped; you go get her, but you don't dare let anybody know it."

"And why not?"

"Because, sweet child of my soul—

because you are one of those darling devils who compromise whatever you touch. Anybody who shakes hands with you smells of brimstone for a week."

"And yet you lunch with me!"

"Me? Hah! People couldn't say anything about me half as bad as they've already said. I've had a severe attack of gossipitis, and recovered, and now I'm immune. I can even be seen alone in public with you, Perry darling, and not suffer."

"But how about me?" he smiled. "Won't I suffer from being seen with you? There are degrees of deviltry among us devils."

"Don't be humorous, Perry. As I was saying, everybody that is ever going to stop speaking to me has stopped long ago. The rest of them know that I'm on the square, and—"

"I beg your pardon; I missed that last."

"Even Mrs. Nicolls has asked me up to her blow-out at Newport, and I'm going."

"Don't let me detain you."

"I'm traveling on your money."

"Whew! What's the fare?"

"Five hundred dollars."

"Make it New Zealand, and I'll pay it—oh way."

"Are you as afraid of me as all that?"

"I'm not in the least afraid of you."

"You don't mind my telling the papers, then, that you rescued Muriel Schuyler from the gunmen?"

"Not at all. Only be sure to address it to the comic supplements. The news editor might ask you where you got such a crazy idea and what evidence you based it on."

Pet was not shaken at all in her belief but she was a trifle shaken in her confidence. She assumed a pleading tone—a crucial mistake in her business:


"Now, Perry, don't try to bluff your grandmother. You got Muriel out of the scrape and you're trying not to get her into another. It's mighty white of you. All I want is for you to be sweet enough to lend me the money to buy me a costume for Mrs. Nicolls' *'Au fond de la mer.'* You ought to help me, because if I can get Winnie it takes out of your way a dangerous rival for Muriel."

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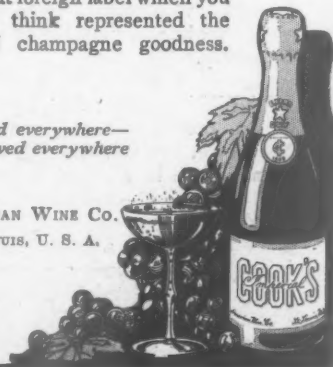
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This last was a tactical error. It touched Perry's chivalry to the core, because it put an evil significance upon his interest in Muriel.

"Look here, Pet. Muriel Schuyler is the deentest young woman I've ever known. And I've only met her once or twice. It's simply unspeakable for you to waste your ghastly imagination on her character."

"She stands for you, Perry. One rotten apple in a barrel, you know. You're mighty anxious to protect her from me, but by the Lord, you've got to pay for protection."

"Plain blackmail, eh?"

"Perry, if you use that word again I'll horsewhip you. I swear I will."

He smiled untrified: "What word do you prefer, Angel-face?"

"I'm hard up and I want to borrow some money. I offer to do you a favor and ask you to do me one—that's all."

"Borrow, eh? But borrowing implies returning."

"I'll return it—when I marry Winnie Nicolls."

"That'll be the day after never. When Mrs. Nicolls invites you to her party, that doesn't mean for life. She isn't giving her Winnie away as a souvenir, you know. If you're offering me this as an investment, Pet—ump-umm!"

She was in such a disarray of anger, anxiety, helplessness, desperation, that he was tempted to slip her one of his thousand-dollar bills as a charity. He had such impulses, and the more foolish they were, the more they fascinated him.

He was saved from the extravagance by a page who came to his table with the word that he was "wanted on the 'phone by a lady."

PERRY was sure that it was Muriel, and left in such haste that he carried his napkin halfway through the dining-room before he realized it and flung it on the tray of an omnibus. He closed the door of the telephone booth as gingerly as if it were a boudoir, and gathering his features into a gorgeous smile, cooed into the receiver his most honeyfied "Hello."

It was not Muriel that answered him, but a voice that asked:

"Is that choo, Mist' Murryt'oo?"

"A new maid or somebody speaking for her," he thought, and answered "Yes."

"Say, listen; I'm talkin' from Noo Joisey."

"New Jersey! How on earth did you get there."

"I got here under the oath. And it was some trip, take it from me. Well—say, listen:"

"Who are you, anyway?"

"Aw, you know me."

"No doubt, but I don't place you at the moment."

"Say, listen: I don't dast give me name; them telephone molls has got ears could hear a mile, and—but you remember me all right. I'm the little lady you're dancin' with last night and tips you off to how to save a soittain pawty what was bein' kidnaped. Get me?"

"Oh, yes, of course! How do you do?"

"I'm grand, I don't think. I'm much ubbliged to you for namin' no names in the papers. I been readin' 'em. You can get the N'York papers 'way over here in Joisey City. But they tell me me man is collared."

"That last again, please."

"Say, listen: remember me tellin' you me husband was leadin' the gang was doin' the job?"

"Yes."

"Well, the flatties nailed um."

"Once more, if you don't mind."

"Aw! he was urrested."

"Oh, that's too bad! I am sorry."

"I'm not. If he hadn' 'a' went ta jail, I'd 'a' went ta the morgue. Honest. I beat it just in time. It was a case of the quick or the dead with me all right."

"Oh, I'm so sorry," said Perry, impatiently patient. "But I'm glad to hear that you're safe."

"Oh yes, I'm safe from me husband but that don't get me nothin' to eat, you know. If I gotta croak from starvin' I'd rather it was him got me. It would be less trouble for me and more fun for him. Well, 'z I's sayin', seems to me like it was kind of up to you and that soittain pawty we spoke of to look after me and see I don't do a fade-away from gettin' out the habit of eatin'. Do you see what I mean?"



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"Well—yes—I rather fancy I do."

"And what you fancy you're goin' to do 'bout it?"

"I'll have to think it over."

"While I eat me finger nails and drink the public air? Not on your sweet life. I done you a good toin and you got a right to slip me some coin and slip it quick."

"How much of a slip would you need?"

Ida hoped to get fifty dollars, so she said:

"A hundred bones'll hold me—"

"All right," said Perry merrily.

"—for a while," Ida hastily amended.

Perry shook his head. The sliding scale of the blackmailer's art was being pushed along. But he took down Ida's assumed name and her temporary address, and vowed that he would remit that afternoon.

He felt that Ida had at least deserved as much as she got. But what had Pet Bettany done to collect wages on? He went back to her with anger and stubbornness in his heart. When Pet reiterated her demand, he did not spare her feelings. Most bluntly he refused her.

When she threatened to appeal to Muriel again he laughed: "If you find where she is let me know, will you? I can't find a trace of her."

Pet snapped: "All right for you, Perry mine. I'll get you yet."

Then they dismissed the subject, and finished the lunch in bantering small talk and scandal with such amiability that the waiter never suspected that they had quarreled.

Pet insisted on paying the bill, and they parted at the taxicab in apparently the friendliest spirit. He went home to find Muriel's invitation to tea, and his heart rejoiced.

But in Pet's heart was rage. She spent much time and some money in calling up Muriel only to find out that she had vanished.

Pet did not go to Newport. She did not gleam at Mrs. Nicolls' submarine fête. She wept like a little fiend deprived of a famous wish. She hated her mother for being what she called poor. She hated Muriel Schuyler for being inaccessible. She hated Perry Merithew for resisting

her attack. She hated Perry almost as much as she hated Muriel. But she did not inform the newspapers of Perry's rescue, because once more her bolt would be useless, shot. She promised herself the sufficient squaring of accounts the moment the chance arose.

She lost no time, however, in informing Winnie Nicolls that Perry Merithew and Muriel had a perfect understanding, and filled his clean young heart with ugly thoughts.

## CHAPTER XX

### I

MURIEL dared not go ashore. Her father warned her that the police would be seeking her, and that if she were found she would be held as a witness under heavy bond. He was afraid to go ashore himself; he sent a man to telephone Mr. Chivot to come aboard. And he dropped down the bay with the yacht and kept steam up.

Chivot came and was loaded up with errands of the greatest complexity, which he would be sure to remember marvelously and accomplish without the least mistake.

Muriel insisted that Mr. Chivot should take up the rescue of the Balinsky family from deportation and carry it to the President of the United States if necessary.

Mr. Chivot protested that the President was not easy to reach, and that letters of this sort would be simply referred back to the department concerned.

"If he could only be made to understand, he would interfere, I know," Muriel insisted. Mr. Chivot attempted a sarcasm:

"You'd better write him all about it yourself."

To his dismay, Muriel leaped at the idea:

"I will!" she cried like the allegory of Chicago. "How do I address him: Your Royal Highness? or Your Serene High Mightiness, or how?"

Mr. Chivot sighed: "You can say Your Excellency, if you want to; but since your father voted against him, you might begin, 'Dear Mr. President.'"



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"Is that all?" she gasped. "Why, that's the way you'd address anybody!"

Mr. Chivot, who knew everything, including his own equality with anybody on earth, explained:

"We're nearly as free as France, where every man is Monsieur and every woman Madame or Mademoiselle."

After a moment of disappointment at the gray tameness of it, Muriel felt suddenly a little pang of pride. She laughed: "It's kind of nice to live in a country where we're all so equal, isn't it?"

**S**HE worked a long while on her letter, tearing up an unconscionable amount of stationery with groans of disgust, violently punishing the paper as if it were to blame. At last she threw revision to the winds and wrote it all in one dash, and achieved at least the prime essence of a good letter—spontaneity. This is what she showed her father:

Dear Mr. President:

I beg a thousand pardons for intruding on so busy a person as Your Excellency must be, especially as you don't like my father's principles and he didn't vote for you. But I'll make him next time, if you can see your way clear to doing me a terribly important favor. And this isn't bribery either.

Everybody knows that you are a very just man. I am sure that you will take pleasure in seeing justice done to an awfully pitiful case. I'll tell it as briefly as I can.

You see, sir, a poor Russian Jew named Michal Balinsky came over here to escape from the Black Hundreds. He worked hard and starved till he saved money to bring over his wife and daughter. They arrived and passed safely through Ellis Island. But nearly a year later the daughter broke down with nervous prostration. The doctors—all except a very brilliant young physician named Clinton Worthing—said that she was insane and ordered her deported. This meant that the mother would have to go back with her forever. And it was dangerous for them in Russia. And the poor father would be all alone here. He could not go with them because it would have meant death to him, and it means starvation to the only two he has on earth. It is simply too cruel for words, and I hope—I think I know—that you will do everything in your power to prevent this cruel, awful, un-American, in-

human crime against a poor, little, harmless, pathetic family. They have suffered enough without this Government picking on them. They fled from Russia because it was too cruel for them. You don't want it said that this country is crueler than Russia, do you?

The newspapers are cruel enough as you know all too well. Through no fault of mine, I've got to go to Europe on account of them. You can't get away, can you? I want to leave the case of the poor Balinsky family at your feet.

This letter is not in proper form for an appeal, but please accept it as a petition thrown into your carriage and please, oh please, send word to your Secretary of Labor that he must under no circumstances refuse the appeal when it comes before him—if it is not there already.

Dr. Clinton Worthing, an eminent young surgeon of the Bellevue staff, will testify that the girl is not permanently insane, and he guarantees to cure her if he is allowed to. And my father and I will guarantee that she does not become a burden on the Government. So I hope and pray that you will stretch out your powerful hand and shelter these poor, little, innocent sheep from slaughter.

With no end of thanks in advance, I beg you to believe me, dear Mr. President, most gratefully and respectfully yours,

MURIEL SCHUYLER.

Jacob read the letter through and laughed tenderly over it.

"What do you think of it?" Muriel asked anxiously.

"It's not exactly what Chivot would have written," Jacob smiled.

"But will the President be offended?"

"He's had daughters," said Jacob, and reached up and caught her cheeks in his palms and dragged her head down within kissing-reach.

**S**HE seated herself on the arm of his chair with her dense copper hair shadowing the sparse platinum of his and began to wheedle:

"Daddy, I want you to give me a lot of money to spend on poor people, wont you?"

"What do you call lots?"

"I don't know. Sometimes a very little will save some awfully nice person from a terrible, terrible tragedy. Sometimes it takes more."

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"I know, and it does no end of good, but I'd like some that I can call my very own. And I want you to let me engage Doctor Worthing on a salary to go round as a kind of Good Samaritan looking for people that need help."

"For the Lord's sake!"

"He's a wonderful physician, and he knows heaps about frauds and swindles, and he wouldn't waste the money."

"Nonsense, my child!"

"Then I don't go to Europe. I'll stay here and face the music—and drag you all into the papers."

This pistol at his head brought his hands up again, and he agreed to talk it over with Doctor Worthing at dinner.

And now the launch came beetling over the water bearing the chivalrous Mr. Merithew to tea.

## II

LIKE others of their group, the Schuylers could be either miserly or spendthrift of either money or hospitality. They resolved that Perry Merithew had earned the best the house could afford.

As he came up the side of the yacht his hand was seized in both the full fat hands of Jacob Schuyler, who exclaimed:

"My boy, I can never tell you how grateful I am to you for taking my poor little girl from those hounds. Frankly, I hadn't expected such heroism from you. The tact you displayed did not surprise me, but the heroism—God bless you for that."

Perry stammered and was as awkward as a baseball hero acknowledging the plaudits of the bleachers. Next he passed into the almost hysterical gratitude of Mrs. Schuyler. And from her into the boyishly awkward acknowledgments of Muriel.

Tea was served on the shade deck with the best service, but Perry did not take tea. Jacob joined him in a substitute—something just as bad.

Muriel made no stint of her praise. She was neither tired nor sleepy now, and she was very, very beautiful in her yachting white, with all New York and

Brooklyn and the Bay in a cyclorama round about.

Perry lost his head completely. She seemed so admirable and so nobly desirable that he began to think her not unattainable. He was somewhat older, of course, but he felt as young as he ever had felt, and he permitted his fancy to play upon her, though her mother kept alluding to his wife, his charming wife. Still, wives were not the obstacles nowadays they once were.

Perry would have been willing to linger there for the rest of his existence. Indeed, Jacob had to get rid of him at last by saying that the launch was going ashore to bring out a dinner guest. He took the hint and made his adieux, covered with phrases of praise and thanks that fairly hung his neck with Hawaiian flower-ropes. Muriel and her family made haste to change to the dinner uniform.

When Perry stepped ashore, he found a young man waiting for the launch. Perry did not know him. Nor did the young man know Perry. They looked at each other so jealously that their very eyes sparred.

## III

DOCTOR WORTHING came aboard in a state of acute embarrassment. He was angry at his ignorance. It was his first yacht. But he walked as large as if he owned it.

Muriel met him at the top of the steps, and he clung to her hand as if she were pulling him out of drowning waters. He embarrassed her pleasantly by the greediness of his clutch, and she hastened to pass him on to her parents in the library.

When they had given him warm handclasps and regarded him with the fascinated horror parents feel for young men interested in their young daughters, Muriel said:

"Speak your piece now, Susan."

Mrs. Schuyler, who was Susan, glared at Muriel, then began an oration of gratitude for Worthing's efforts to rescue Muriel. This robbed the taciturn youth of whatever words he might have had in his possession. He made a few gestures



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of deprecation, swallowed hard, smiled miserably, felt an idiot.

When dinner was fairly under way, Muriel signaled Jacob to attack the job, she had imposed on him.

"My daughter is called abroad rather unexpectedly, Doctor Worthing," he began, "and she has to leave a number of things undone. She insisted that I ought to—that is I'm very glad to—er—I was wondering if you cared to accept a—er—a kind of a—sort of a—roving commission."

Doctor Worthing was bewildered: "I don't believe I quite understand."

"That's strange," Muriel exclaimed with a spanking glance at her father, "when he explained it so clearly and fully."

Then she outlined her plan to him as she had outlined it to her father, only with every imaginable difference of manner. Now she was not a spoiled child wheedling further exactions from a father who protested everything on general principles, but she was a coquette practicing her wiles on a man.

They can't help it, at that age—perhaps not at any age; but a spectator at too great a distance to be an auditor would never have imagined that the young woman was asking the young man to accept a salary for acting as her benevolent agent in the slums.

That was one trouble. She fascinated Worthing so much further than ever that all he could think of was how lovable she was, how intolerable her absence would be and how impossible it was that he should think of taking her wages when he wanted her heart. His mind kept telling him: "If you take a job as her father's employee, you cut yourself off from her hand forever." There are occasions when love works severance more than hostility.

He refused with much firmness and as much expression of polite regret as he could manage.

Muriel sank back disheartened and discouraged. She was not keen enough to realize the compliment he paid her. She felt herself rebuffed.

Her mother took up the neglected business of talk, and talked about health.

Mrs. Schuyler and Jacob had reached

the age when their souls were fighting for their bodies against increasing dispossess proceedings that must eventually oust them from their tenements. Their interest in their own engines was tremendous. They kept Doctor Worthing talking about the newest theories and practices. He proved almost garrulous in his own field. He was of the modern schools modern—too young to have had to unlearn any of the older dogmas, too young to qualify his own dogmas. His hospital work had given him such a variety of experience as a practicing physician would not have met in years. He had a genius for the mechanics and chemistry of existence. He gained the respect of the Schuylers in a few minutes.

Mrs. Schuyler was forever changing physicians; the next doctor was always Æsculapius himself; the preceding doctor always a mountebank or a pantaloon. She was soon convinced that Doctor Worthing could prescribe for her the very elixir of life. She overwhelmed him, when the roast came in, with a quiet remark:

"Jacob dear, it strikes me that it would be a splendid idea to ask Doctor Worthing to come along with us as our family physician."

"But Kenneman is already engaged," said Jacob. "He comes aboard to-night."

"Ah, Kenneman!" groaned Mrs. Schuyler. "He doesn't know anything. He's an old fool!"

"Well," said Jacob, "it might be arranged—if Doctor Worthing is free."

Doctor Worthing could not speak. Suddenly the steward had set down upon the table not a huge roast on a silver charger but a wonderland—a cloudy miracle of towers and palaces of Alps and Fontainebleaux, with Thames and Rhine like ribbons winding from Killarney to Como. He saw himself with Muriel in oceanic moon-nights and Norwegian midnight sunrises. He saw her at his elbow in motor cars and gondolas. He visited with her Chamounix and Montmartre, the Lido and the Lichtenthaler Allée—all the places he had read about or had traveled when he studied medicine abroad.

The steward had placed upon the



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board a vast platter of romance, and Jacob was carving him a slice of the rare.

Muriel, too, must have seen such a vision, for she turned pale, then red, then pale again. Her nostrils were tense and her hands uneasy of control.

Mrs. Schuyler, glancing at Doctor Worthing, saw the tidal wave of blood that overswept his face and his very hands. She saw his gaze leap Muriel-wards. She turned her eyes on Muriel and saw that she was breathing hard.

The old lady's training as a duenna had taught her to recognize such crises in the young. She had been young herself once. Her shrewd soul cried: "Oho!" and "This will never do!"

Without delaying she sighed: "Still, I suppose it's impossible. We'll have to get along with Kenneman this voyage. Perhaps Doctor Worthing would come with us next time."

Doctor Worthing knew that Next Time is the alias of Not At All. His courage wrung from his torture a dismal smile, and he bowed his head. When he looked up, the cloudy world had vanished and only a haunch of beef was on the table and Jacob was carving it with a knife of steel, and carving it thin.

#### IV

THE rest of the dinner was a funeral feast to the young people. Yet the very hint of the voyage they might have had somehow sufficed to carry their hearts almost as far forward together as if they had actually taken it. There was little speech between them except the conversation of eyes, but they felt already in a sense betrothed after a long wooing.

Mrs. Schuyler understood and was sorry for them both, but she had no intention of allowing the impulsive Muriel to stray any further into these slumming expeditions. A love affair with a penniless young physician would be a ludicrous calamity, and the sooner it was prevented, the better.

She hardly allowed Worthing to finish his cigar before she arranged with the sailing master to appear and say that it was time to send off the launch for

Dr. Kenneman, and please was anybody going ashore!

Worthing accepted the *congé*, and rose with an ill-suppressed sigh, said his good-nights to the elder Schuylers and put out his hand to Muriel.

"I'll go to the ladder with you," she said, and Mrs. Schuyler made no objection, feeling that frustration would only enhance their emotion.

"Put a scarf about you, dear," she said. "There's a heavy fog outside."

And so there was, the deck and stanchions dripping, the lights all haloed, and the air a palpable glamour in whose fleece everything was speedily smothered.

"It's a bit thick, isn't it?" said Muriel to the sailor who guided them to the gangway.

"It is that, Miss. We look like a thripleet of 'ysters in a milk stoo."

The distance to the side of the boat where the launch clung in a mystery of sheen and shadow was hatefully short. The sailor held his glimmering lantern close to the platform of the stairway set sidewise like the stoops in Batavia Street. Perhaps it reminded Muriel of that little avenue of her entrance into the realm of empty pockets, for she said:

"Watch my poor for me till I come back, wont you? Take good care of my children, will you?"

"Yes," said Worthing, and put unimaginable fervor into the syllable.

"And write me often—and long—always in care of the Crédit Lyonnais—will you remember?"

Another loaded "Yes."

"And I'll write you once in a while if I may."

"If you may!" he groaned. He was scared by the emotion struggling at his throat. He caught her hand and wrung it, afraid to trust his voice that was strangely eager to sob instead of say "Good-by."

He groped into the launch, steadied by the sailor's hand. When he looked up, he could not see her, though her place was iridescent, as if an angel had just vanished, leaving the air a-shimmer.

But he heard her soft "Good-by," and answered it. Then the motor of the launch began its cynical "Tut-tut!"

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tut-tut!" and there was a sense of fish-like swerve and dash—and she was gone.

All about was a sound of squawling foghorns, of splashing ferry boats, thumping tugs, and raucous voices as of contemptuous cloud-gods mocking the folly of the poor young man who let himself love the daughter of the ogre in the castle above the clouds.

## V

MURIEL herself was lost in a fog, and little knew how much bewilderment she was causing. Doctor Worthing's heart was not the only one she was leaving in disorder. Perry Merithew was aching for her, too. It was not poverty that stood in his way, for he had wealth if he would only manage it.

But while Doctor Worthing was uncertain of his future and rashly planning to attach himself to impossible balloons of hope, Perry Merithew was troubled by the very definite certainty of his past and was resolving to cut it loose.

He was even now on his way to cast Maryla Sokalska adrift.

Muriel from the best part of her heart had been moved to rescue Maryla from the slums into the realm of beauty at Dutilh's dressmaking shop. She had succeeded in bringing her to the attention of Perry Merithew, who made her his. She had transplanted an orchid from a jungle to a conservatory only to have it plucked and worn by its first ruthless admirer.

Next, Muriel by her very ingratitude to Perry Merithew had rendered herself difficult to him, therefore more interesting. He imputed her ingratitude to her dislike of himself and his record. And he was in a mood of repentance that made even him set it down to her honor.

While she was reproaching herself for not treating him squarely, he was adoring her for being too good to tolerate him. And now it suited his whim to want to be good.

There are restless natures that, after exhausting every vice, in turn come

round at last to being good as a wild novelty worth trying. They degenerate, as it were, into virtue. Like those who have imbibed too many liquors and burned themselves out, they cry for ice-water as the ultimate boon.

Perry Merithew was at that point of his pendulum-swing. He was weary of selfish and indecorous women. He was disgusted with Aphra, disgruntled with Pet Bettany, disturbed by Red Ida, and finished with Maryla—he hoped.

Wild projects of capturing Muriel were flashing through his whimsical soul. He would force his wife to divorce him; he would politely abandon her and give her that as an excuse. And he would spend the period of abandonment in Europe working up accidental meetings with Muriel Schuyler. But first, he must free himself of the last of his incumbrances. He would go at once to Maryla Sokalska and set her free—or at least return her to the shop where he got her and ask that she be credited to his account.

It pleased his humor to say to himself that he was doing an honorable thing. And of course he was, from one view-point. But how would poor Maryla view it? She was of a dark and Oriental blood that placed revenge high among its passions. She was of a warm and luxurious blood that loved slowly but with deep burning love, and hated in the same fashion. She had just grown used to her sin, and comfortably ensconced in it as among silken cushions. Her answer to exile would be the opposite of *Rosalind's*. She would cry: "What's set free but banished?"

Muriel did not know that Maryla owed to her the gaining of Merithew's interest, and Maryla would not know that she owed to Muriel the loss of it.

Like a kitten that has romped through a work-basket, Muriel had gone dragging at her feet various skeins and intertangling them so that by and by the thread of Perry Merithew's life should be so knotted in with the others that it had to be snipped off short by the shears of Fate.

**The next installment of "Empty Pockets" will be in the April Red Book, on the news-stands March 23rd.**